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THE AMATEUR GARDENER'S ROSE BOOK.

By the late Dr. JULIUS HOFFMANN.

Translated from the German by JOHN WEATHERS, F.R.H.S., N.R.S.

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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

AUGUST 1905.*

Wild Wheat.

BY M. E. FRANCIS (MRS. FRANCIS BLUNDELL),

AUTHOR OF 'FIANDER'S WIDOW,' 'THE MANOR FARM,'
'LYCHGATE HALL,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

NEW YEAR BELLS.

CHRISTMAS came, and Mr. and Mrs. Meadway honoured the new-made couple with their company. The keeper was solemnly jocular, Mrs. Meadway garrulous.

'They haven't a-left off talkin' about you yet,' she remarked. 'No, they haven't—not down our way. Miss Manvers herself—there, ye never did hear such things as she do say! The way she took on—dear to be sure, nobody ever heerd the like. But I do make allowances. 'Tis that hay-tea an' such-like what do turn her brain.'

'There's summat in that,' agreed her husband, as the young folk remained silent.

'It do stand to reason,' resumed Mrs. Meadway triumphantly. 'Tis there, wrote in the Bible plain, as folks didn't ought to go eatin' grass and a-makin' theirselves like the beasts o' the field. King Nebuchadnezzar—you do know what came to he, along o' sich doin's. But Miss Manvers, she said as she knowed all along as there was summat at bottom o' your wantin' to be a keeper, Mr. Hounsell; so I says: "E-es, ma'am, an' there's more nor you knowed that. I did know all along as Mr. Peter Hounsell had very

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good reasons for what he done." I knowed ! ' repeated Mrs. Meadway, chuckling.

Peter and his wife were both mute, but Mr. Meadway, somewhat indistinctly on account of his mouth being full, observed that his old woman was terr'ble sharp, and opined that it wouldn't be much good to try to go a-deceivin' o' she.

Elated by her husband's appreciation, Mrs. Meadway thereupon proceeded to quote some of the sentiments recently expressed by Miss Manvers, dwelling at great length on those to which she took the most exception.

Peter made no comment, but his face grew ever darker. Prue, who always seemed to keep a finger on the pulse of his mood, knew instinctively when this or that allusion jarred on him, and winced accordingly. Worse was to come, however, for Mrs. Meadway, suddenly dropping her narrative tone, and with it her cheerfulness, began to sigh and shake her head, glancing at Peter in a way that was evidently meant to pique his curiosity.

He remained silent, however, and Prue, knowing better than to inquire into the cause of her mother's new-found melancholy, made one or two feeble remarks with the intention of changing the current of her thoughts.

'Ah-h-h, my dear,' responded Mrs. Meadway, in return to one of these, 'I'm sure I can't tell 'ee whether puss do miss 'ee or not, there's more important things to be thinkin' on. There, I never was one to go fault-fandin' wi' my neighbours, more particular them as I've always larned to think my betters; but a body may have their feelin's all the same, more particular a mother.'

Peter's gloomy eyes rested upon her for a moment, unconsciously questioning.

'As I did say to father there,' resumed the good lady with gusto, "'Meadway," I did say, "we bain't quality," I did say, "but for all that our maid is one what needn't be looked down upon as if she was a bit o' dust. She's a wife what anybody mid be proud on."'

'She be,' growled the keeper, with a somewhat truculent roll of the head.

'I couldn't help feelin' cut to the heart,' continued Mrs. Meadway, addressing the company generally, 'when I did hear the kind o' talk as was goin' on in some places about my darter's weddin'. If folks casts off their own flesh and blood,' she continued, still in an impartial tone, 'there's no reason why other

folks shouldn't welcome 'em into their families, and anybody with any feelin' did ought to be glad as it be so.'

Peter pushed back his chair and made for the door ; but, apparently changing his mind, went towards the fire, and began to mend it as though he had had no other intention in rising from the table.

'Mother, dear mother, don't go on like that,' whispered Prue. 'He can't a-bear any talk about his mother.'

'Oh, an' can't he?' inquired Mrs. Meadway, dropping her voice ; then, shaking her head mysteriously, she whispered confidentially : 'But they do say, my dear, the way they've a-been a-carryin' on up to Hounsell's about you and he is summat awful.'

'Hush, oh, do hush!' pleaded Prue.

In spite of this protest, however, Mrs. Meadway continued to make various communications in a most audible whisper ; and, in spite of the racket he was making with coals, Peter caught several pregnant phrases :

'Took to her bed the whole of the weddin'-day.' . . . 'Maister Godfrey so savage there was no goin' a-nigh en.' . . . 'Deb did tell I as the wold lady do look twenty year older.' . . . Says he, "I'll hear no talk o' the family disgrace!"'

'I'll make you a cup of tea, mother,' cried Prue, almost distractedly, 'I know you always like one to your dinner. If you'd fill the kettle for me, Peter——'

Peter went out at once and handed her back the kettle through the door, observing indistinctly that he had something to see to outside.

He did not reappear for more than an hour, and then was so silent that his presence could not be said to add to the general cheerfulness. Prue was on thorns, divining exactly how much effort it cost him to respond to her father's new-born familiarity, and to keep himself in check when Mrs. Meadway rallied him. She observed his gloom deepen as the day passed, and it was with feelings of unmixed relief that she saw the visitors depart.

And now it was New Year's Eve, and Peter and she sat as usual opposite each other, reading, or pretending to read. Suddenly he got up and began to pace about the room.

Prue closed her book and cudgelled her brains for some remark which might change the current of his thoughts without being too obtrusive.

'You can hear church bells here,' she observed. 'Did you know the sound would travel so far, Peter?'

He paused, looking at her as though he did not comprehend.

'We'll be hearing them ringing in the New Year presently, if we keep awake long enough,' she said, speaking a little tremulously, for his expression alarmed her.

'The New Year!' said Peter. He turned to the window and flung it open; it had been snowing, and an icy blast circled round the little room.

He jerked the casement to again after a moment, and resumed his wild-beast-like tramp up and down.

The New Year! The New Year! Twelve months ago at this time he was dwelling at home, a little sad because of the recent death of his father, a little sore at heart on account of that father's injustice. He had not then ascended into the heights or fallen unto the depths. And now where was he—what was he? What would the New Year bring him? More savourless days, more restless nights—his food, dust and ashes in his mouth. And he was not yet twenty-three; the years that were coming must be reckoned by decades and scores.

That passion, which had laid hold of him midway in the year that was gone, he had thought it dead, he had buried it deep, deep, he had trampled it underground; and then he had hurried away from the place where he had known it, that he might be free from its very memory.

But, lo! he had forgotten that there were such things as ghosts, and a spectre had risen now to confront him by his fireside.

Nathalie—'Not the wicked, sordid girl you despise, but the Dream-Nathalie!'

The Dream-Nathalie to whom he had pledged his untried youth, his first ardours, the whole of his lusty manhood!

Oh, fool that he was to think that such things could die at his bidding! That by a single hasty vow he could redeem himself—he who was already a thousand times forsworn.

The evil spirit, which he had striven so hard to drive away, had come back to take possession of its former home, bringing with it seven other spirits to rend and torment him.

Prue stood by his side all at once, her hand upon his arm.

'You'll tire yourself out,' she said. 'Dear Peter, you have worked so hard all day—you need rest. Let's—let's forget it's New Year's Day to-morrow. If we make haste we may fall asleep before the bells come.'

He put her away from him gently: 'You go up,' he said, in a muffled voice. 'I can't come just yet.'

She left him without further protest, and Peter, dropping into

his chair, gathered together the embers with a shaking hand, and sat staring into them. Then, all at once springing to his feet again, he rushed out of the house, and made for the fir wood.

What had he done, he cried to himself as he wandered among the trees, what had he done? How could he make an end of that which would not die? How could he go on cheating himself and cheating Prue? Oh, Prue! The thought of her was the most agonising of all. What had he done with her poor little life? Chained it for ever to that miserable one of his! He had taken her all, and now with a quailing heart he told himself he had no longer even husks to give her.

How long he wandered about among the trees he scarcely knew, but at last his frenzy spent itself; the icy cold which chilled him through and through served no doubt in some measure to restore him to his senses. He was beginning wearily to turn his steps homewards, when he heard a faint cry, and after a moment descried a little bobbing light among the dark trunks. As he broke stiffly into a run he heard the cry again. It was a woman's voice—it must be Prue's; frightened by his prolonged absence, she had come to look for him.

He sent forth an answering shout; thus did these two solitary dwellers in that lonely place call to each other like night-birds.

He came in sight of her before she perceived him, and marked how white and scared was her face, and that she was sobbing as she went. Her hair fell upon her shoulders, her white nightgown showed through the folds of her cloak; as she stumbled forward, gazing wildly about her, Peter caught her in his arms.

She clung to him passionately—Prue, who was so chary of her caresses, as a rule, in her fear that they might weary him—the hands which she clasped about his neck were cold as death, the cheek which she pressed against his was bedabbled with tears. Peter gathered her to him and kissed her many times, murmuring half-unconsciously words of endearment, of consolation; and, at last, she found voice:

'Oh, Peter,' she cried brokenly, 'Peter! Oh, I thought I should never find you—I thought you was dead!'

Her whole form was shaking with sobs; he felt that her heart was bursting.

'Oh,' she cried again, 'why can't I make you happy—oh, Peter, why can't I? I would die for you every moment of the day.'

'I believe you would,' returned Peter, in a low voice. 'Come,

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'Oh,' she cried again, 'why can't I make you happy—oh, Peter, why can't I? I would die for you every moment of the day.'

'I believe you would,' returned Peter, in a low voice. 'Come,

Prue, I must get you home—you must be chilled through and through.'

He stooped to pick up the lantern which had fallen, and saw that the little bare foot nearer to him was bruised and bleeding.

'Good heavens, Prue!' he cried. 'What have you been doing—how long have you been looking for me?'

Prue looked down at her foot, and then back at him in a dazed way.

'A long, long time,' she said. 'There were so many tracks in the snow—I followed, and followed, and could not find you; I suppose I dropped my shoe.'

'You might have killed yourself,' said Peter.

'And wouldn't that be a good thing?' returned Prue. 'What use am I if I can't do anything for you! I can't even comfort you. When you are sad you—you run away from me.'

'I will never do that again,' said he, earnestly. 'I swear it. My own little Prue, you must not talk of such a thing as dying—what should I do without you—my only comforter—the one creature in the world that loves me? Let me carry you home, child—I won't have you put that poor foot to the ground. Let us never again speak of this horrible night. I was mad, Prue, but you have cured me.'

He took her up in his arms, feeling more moved than he had ever thought to be again, and she clung to him gladly. As he felt the tumultuous beating of her heart against his breast, he told himself that he had found a buckler by means of which he would contrive to keep the unholy spirit, now once more exorcised, for ever at bay.

And when, as he trudged through the snow, tenderly carrying his light burden, the dreaded sound of the midnight bells fell upon his ears, he bent his head over the dark one that was pillowed on his bosom.

'May we spend many New Years together!' he said, and kissed her.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE EMPTY SLEEVE.

ONE afternoon, towards the beginning of February, Peter came home a little earlier than usual ; and, as his boots were particularly muddy, he followed the custom which obtained in the thrifty Meadway household, and discarded them at the door.

Prue was not in the living-room, and he was proceeding in search of her, when, on crossing the little back kitchen, he caught sight of her through the narrow window. She was in the yard, busily brushing one of his coats.

He was about to call out when sundry proceedings on her part caused him to pause.

She was standing close to the wood-shed, the roof of which, being somewhat decayed, was upheld in places by unbarked fir-boughs. A small branch had been lopped off one of these at a height a little above Prue's head, the jagged remnant forming a convenient peg. Upon this peg Prue now hung the coat in question, carefully arranging it so that the front of the garment faced her. She contemplated it for a moment or two with her head a little on one side, as was her wont when following out an interesting train of thought ; then, going closer, she took hold of the lapel, smiling softly to herself ; and, finally, laying her head against the breast, drew one sleeve gently round her waist.

Peter stepped back quickly, and regained the kitchen with all possible haste. Not for worlds would he have Prue know that he had been spectator of this little scene. For all the sober dignity of her matronhood she had not changed much. It was still the same Prue who had covered the doll with her shawl, and kept tryst with the sycamore-tree—a child with the heart of a woman. She was playing still, in a childish way, at the game which is essentially woman's, playing at love, comforting her hungry heart by tokens of imaginary tenderness.

All that day there were strange stirrings in Peter's breast, like to the stirrings of Nature out of doors. The world was all brown and grey, it was true ; nevertheless, life, long frozen, was beginning to grow active again, all manner of dormant things pulsed beneath the surface, little green shoots made their appearance in places hitherto bare.

That evening, when Peter sat pondering with his book as usual

on his knee, he was startled by a sudden noise. The heavy volume which Prue had been conning had slipped from her lap on to the floor. She had been sitting on a little stool, and had been reading, as was her custom, chiefly by firelight ; but now, tired out, she had fallen asleep, her head uncomfortably pillowed on the chair against which she had propped herself.

Peter looked at her long. She was weary, poor little creature, weary with working for him ; she seemed to have grown thinner of late, and there were circles round her eyes. Then he thought of the smile which she had worn as she took hold of the lapel of his coat, and of how she had solaced herself with the empty sleeve. Poor little wife ! could she find no better comfort than that ? He rose gently, and stepping on tip-toe to her side, he managed, with infinite precaution, to take the place hitherto occupied by the chair, so that Prue's head was soon pillowed on his shoulder while his arm encircled her waist.

She sighed, but did not wake, and more than an hour passed without their attitude being changed. Peter thought of many things as he sat thus supporting her helpless weight, marking how inert for once lay the little hands that toiled so ceaselessly, how sorrowful was the expression of her face in its repose. It had even a careworn look, at variance with its soft and youthful curves. Presently his glance fell on the book which still lay open beside her. It was an English History of the conscientious and comprehensive order ; the double column of fine print being interrupted here and there by woodcuts representing cooking-vessels and battle-axes. Little Prue had not as yet made much way with her studies ; she was still among the Saxons. Peter smiled to himself, but almost with a groan. She had been on her feet since five, and yet, in the faint hope of making herself a more worthy companion of his gloomy leisure, she had set herself to grapple with this crabbed lore.

Time passed, the fire sank low, and at length Prue shivered in her sleep. Her husband, leaning cautiously forward, endeavoured to add fuel with his spare hand without disturbing her ; but a log slipped and fell with a clatter.

Prue opened her eyes and gazed at him, at first vaguely through the mists of slumber, afterwards in astonishment, almost in alarm. She made a sudden movement as though intending to sit upright. But Peter drew her a little closer to him and pressed back her head gently to its former resting-place.

' Aren't you comfortable there ? ' he whispered.

' Yes, but—you'll be so tired.'

‘Not in the least tired.’

There was a pause ; Peter smoothed back the curly hair from her brow.

‘Prue,’ he said, ‘I’ve been thinking—we’ve been spending our evenings till now in a very stupid way—I with a great book which I don’t read, and you with another great book over which you fall asleep, my poor little woman. And there we sit, whole yards away from each other—which is very foolish when we might be side by side.’

Prue’s deep eyes gazed at him questioningly ; her lips were parted in a tremulous, uncertain smile.

‘Suppose, in future,’ he went on, still stroking her hair, ‘you brought over your little stool and set it close to my chair, and we only had one big book between us—don’t you think it would be a good plan ? I could tell you all you want to know better than that stupid old book. You don’t need to know about battle-axes—I can give you the pith of it in a much shorter time than it would take you to wade through a tenth part by yourself. Now, what do you think of this idea ?’

‘I should like it—just about !’ cried Prue, with an ecstatic little wriggle. ‘Oh, Peter, you are good to me. I’m only afraid of—I think you are taking too much on yourself to please me—I’m afraid you’ll think me a bother.’

‘If I were to tell you all I think about you, Brownie, you would grow vain—and it is very bad for Brownies to be vain.’

She looked at him incredulously through the happy tears which she would not allow to fall, and Peter was again conscious of a rush of tenderness which was almost pain. How deep, how passionate was the love which this little creature lavished upon him ! And he, how all unworthy ! He was moved to the heart’s core, and yet humbled.

Very swiftly, very happily, did the evening hours pass thenceforth. Prue was an apt scholar, and under her husband’s tuition made rapid strides ; in her education, as in everything else, her desire for his approval enabled her to do wonders. She was always eager, always alert ; hardly ever had he to tell her a thing twice. Moreover, she was extremely intelligent ; had there been no closer bond between them, Peter would have been interested in such a pupil.

One day she said to him :

‘You must tell me when I don’t speak properly. I want to learn to talk like you. You must stop me when I say things I didn’t ought to.’

'You mustn't say "didn't ought" to begin with,' he returned laughing. 'But I don't know that I want you to change—I shouldn't like you to talk like a book.'

'I don't want to talk like a book,' persisted Prue, with one of her dimpling smiles; 'I want to talk like you.'

In consequence, Peter thenceforth became a strict grammarian; and it was only in moments of hurry or emotion that Prue lapsed into her native Doric.

But no keeper—particularly no keeper so energetic and conscientious as Peter Hounsell, can afford to devote many consecutive evenings to the education of his wife. Duty frequently necessitated his being elsewhere, and two or three times a week he was even forced to be out at night. On these occasions he was far more nervous about Prue than she was on her own account; he took infinite precautions for her safety, going the round of the little house to inspect the fastenings, unchaining the great retriever that it might keep the better guard. Prue thrust forth her head gaily enough from the upper window, and waved her hand as he said good-night at the gate. But he would turn again repeatedly until he saw the light extinguished, and many a time during his midnight tramp his heart would quail at the thought of her loneliness.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AN UNLOOKED-FOR ENCOUNTER.

PETER'S employer was a fussy person, determined to extract every possible fraction of profit or pleasure from the estate which he had only recently purchased for good hard cash, and utterly devoid of the tolerant or perhaps supine spirit with which the man born on the soil usually regards the possessions to which he is so well accustomed. When he was not himself devising new rules he was adopting other folk's innovations, with results by no means conducive to the comfort of his dependents. One of these regulations, though trifling in itself, was extremely galling to Peter.

'I'm to wear a green coat, it seems,' he announced one day, in a tone of exasperation. 'A nice green coat like a flunkey; we're all to be measured at once. Do you think I'll look well in a green coat, Prue?'

'You'd look well in anything,' returned she. 'It doesn't matter, really,' she added, as he frowned. 'Tis only the notion. It would make no difference to what you are if you wore a yellow one.'

'That's true,' he agreed, 'I should be above fretting at such little things. It is, as you say, the idea of wearing a kind of livery that sticks in my throat; but after all I'm the man's servant—why shouldn't I wear his livery? I ought to be thankful that he doesn't expect me to put a cockade in my hat.'

One morning, while the winter was still young, and Peter's green coat was yet glossy and new, he was called upon to don it for an important occasion; the coverts which were under his special jurisdiction were to be shot over for the first time that season.

They were well stocked, and Mr. Ullington had convened several friends and neighbours for the event.

All proceeded satisfactorily until the time came to halt for luncheon, which took place in a little hut provided for the purpose, the keepers and beaters partaking of their own repast a short distance off in the wood.

One of Mr. Ullington's neighbours, a great hunting man, and inclined to be pompous and dictatorial, suddenly remarked that Badgely Wood had fallen off sadly of late, though it had once been considered one of the best coverts in the county.

'We never drew blank here before this year,' he observed in an aggrieved tone. 'I hear you've got a new keeper, Ullington,' he added significantly. 'Badgely Wood adjoins his house, doesn't it?'

The innuendo thus thrown out, due though it might be to a somewhat gloomy condition of mind on the part of the speaker—who had not been shooting his best that morning—was such as could not be disregarded. Somebody had heard that a very promising litter of cubs had been seen during the preceding summer in Badgely. Somebody else wanted to know what had become of them; a third speaker hoped that the new keeper was a reliable man.

'By Jove!' exclaimed Mr. Ullington, setting down his glass, 'you don't mean to say you think——'

'Of course you know all about him?' suggested one of the party as he broke off.

'Well, the truth is I know very little about him. I had to take him in a bit of a hurry, being short-handed. He came from Crayford—the bailiff wrote to me about him. He seems a good sort of fellow—extremely energetic.'

'Energetic?—H'm!' said somebody.

'We'll have him in and question him!' cried Mr. Ullington, flushing hotly. 'You can see for yourselves what sort of man he is, and draw your own conclusions. If I thought the fellow was up to any trickery I'd—'

Mr. Ullington was at all times prone to act upon the impulse of the moment, however unusual or undignified it might be.

He had reached the door of the shed by this time, and now angrily summoned Peter to approach.

Peter got up from the ground and crossed the intervening space without any undue haste. He stood there, in the wintry sunshine, his tall dignified figure almost blocking the narrow doorway, his bright eyes wandering questioningly from one to the other of the dubious faces which confronted him. Mr. Ullington had drawn back a little so that Peter stood in full view of all within the hut.

'A question has arisen,' said Mr. Ullington, 'a very unpleasant question, which you may possibly be able to answer at once. How is it there are no foxes in Badgely Wood, Hounsell?'

'I'm sure I don't know,' replied Peter, completely taken by surprise at the query, and forgetful for the moment of their relative positions.

'It seems,' continued his master, 'that up to this they've always been sure of a find there, and they've drawn blank this year.'

'Yes,' went on the neighbour who had first voiced his suspicion. 'A fine litter of cubs was seen in Badgely Wood last summer.'

'What became of them, I wonder?' put in another speaker.

Peter looked round, his face growing suddenly pale, his eyes flashing.

'Does anybody mean to insinuate that I made away with the foxes?' he asked, in a voice that shook with anger.

'Hounsell!' exclaimed Mr. Ullington, 'how dare you speak in such a tone? You forget yourself!'

'I daresay I do forget myself,' broke out Peter. 'The fact is I'm more at home among pink coats than green ones'—flicking contemptuously at his own sleeve—'and I can't be expected to bear such an accusation as that.'

'There, Ullington, leave the fellow alone—he's all right,' said a young man at Mr. Ullington's elbow. 'You've only got to look at him to see he's not the sort of chap who would poison foxes.'

That this conviction was general was proved by the murmurs which reached the host from various sides; even the originator of the innuendo being constrained to own that the man seemed straight enough.

'Very well,' said Mr. Ullington, 'you can go then, Hounsell, though you ought to apologise first for your very disrespectful manner.'

'Apologise!' cried Peter, who was still at white heat; 'I think, when a man is accused of such a confounded low-down trick, the apology is due to him and not from him.'

And with that he stalked away.

'The fellow's mad!' remarked Mr. Ullington, looking after him; 'I am afraid I shall have to get rid of him—did anyone ever hear such impudence?'

'Well, I like the chap!' cried the young man who had before spoken. 'He's a right-down good man and a thorough sportsman. Did you hear him say he was at home among pink coats? I dare say he's been whip somewhere; you touched him up in a tender spot, Ullington. 'Pon my word, I think he's right; he deserves an apology.'

'Oh, nonsense!' said Mr. Ullington; and thereupon changed the conversation, privately resolving to take no further notice of Hounsell's lapse; for he was a man who was ever swayed by the tide of popular opinion.

Throughout the day Peter's self-constituted champion watched him with interest, and more than once attempted to get into conversation with him; but the keeper, having by this time regained his self-possession, repelled all advances with a certain grave dignity which left his new friend more puzzled than before. He noticed with some regret that Peter received the customary gratuities in an ungracious, not to say morose, fashion.

'That fine strapping fellow is a surly chap after all,' he reflected; 'or perhaps it's greed that's at the bottom of it. He'd like to trade upon his grievance, I daresay. I wonder if I can make him relax.'

He drew a sovereign from his pocket, and approaching Peter with a good-humoured smile, endeavoured to slip it into his hand.

'No, thank you,' said the keeper, stepping back quickly.

'Isn't it enough?' inquired the other, with a frown.

'It's too much. If I could I'd chuck back every farthing I've had from the rest of them; but I suppose it would be as much as my place is worth. I can't take anything from you, though; you took my part and treated me like a man—I'll never forget it.'

He kept his hands resolutely behind him, and his new friend was reluctantly forced to return the coin to his own pocket.

Then Peter smiled on him for the first time, and repeating: 'I sha'n't forget it,' touched his hat, and walked away.

It chanced that a day or two later, Peter, going on his afternoon round, came face to face with the same friendly young fellow.

'Hullo!' cried the latter, 'you're the very man I want to see. I was coming to look for you.'

'Were you?' said Peter, adding, after his customary pause, the 'sir,' which he found so difficult to remember.

'You needn't "sir" me if you don't like,' returned the other. 'You're a queer sort of independent chap, I can see.'

'Oh, it makes no difference, sir,' said Peter relaxing, 'and it's the proper thing. I don't leave it out on purpose, but I forget sometimes because I'm not used to it.'

He called up his dog, and leaning negligently against the tree near which they stood, gazed smilingly at his new acquaintance.

The latter was a tall man, nearly as tall as Peter, but not so broad; extremely handsome, and, moreover, possessed of an attractiveness not always associated with good looks; pleased with himself, but not by any means conceited, and with a winning graciousness of manner that amused and in a measure fascinated Peter.

'I'm extremely curious about you, you know,' went on this personage. 'Positively I can't get you out of my head. What was it you said the other day about being at home among pink coats—have you ever been a whip or a huntsman?'

'I've hunted for my own pleasure,' said Peter, who was young enough to enjoy the mystification of his companion; 'but I'm a keeper now, and must try to feel at home among the green coats. I didn't expect to be accused of poisoning foxes, though.'

The other pulled out his cigarette case and offered it to Peter, who accepted the attention with a smile.

'I should really like to know,' he resumed, 'why you are a keeper?'

'For particular reasons of my own,' said Peter.

'Not disposed for confidences, eh? Well, never mind; you're a good chap, and I'm glad to have met you. I am always inclined to fraternise when I can with a thorough-going sportsman, and I can see you are that. I'm a sportsman, too—I'm a soldier into the bargain.'

'A soldier?' repeated Peter.

The other man had extended his hand, and he had been on the point of taking it; but now, struck by some unaccountable presentiment he drew back.

'What is your name?' he inquired.

'You are a cautious fellow,' returned the other, laughing. 'My

name's Cheverill—Ralph Cheverill—I'm in the — Lancers. Anything else you would like to know before you venture on shaking hands ?'

He stretched out his hand once more as he spoke, with the smile which Peter had before deemed fascinating ; but, after a moment, finding that the keeper made no attempt to respond, he dropped it, staring in astonishment.

'What's the matter with you ?' he inquired. 'Does my name displease you ?'

'It does—very much.'

As Peter stood darkly gazing at the young soldier, he seemed to be listening to Nathalie's voice.—'Ralph Cheverill, a young Englishman in a smart regiment.' There stood the man, gay, boyish, *débonnaire*, as though such things did not exist as the broken hearts of women and the blighted lives of men.

'Now, look here,' said Cheverill, after a pause, in an altered voice, his fine, high nostrils dilating, his eyes flashing with anger, 'I begin to think that my friend Ullington was right, and that you are mad. You can never have heard my name before, yet you behave in this extraordinary way at the mere sound of it.'

'I have heard your name before,' said Peter.

'Ralph Cheverill of the — Lancers ?' repeated the other incredulously.

'Ralph Cheverill of the — Lancers,' echoed Peter. 'It is the name of a scoundrel,' he added.

All his wrongs—his and Nathalie's—rose up before him, and he saw the man through a red mist.

Cheverill controlled himself with an effort. 'You are making a very strange mistake. I can safely say I have as clean a sheet as any man in the Service.'

'That may be. Men of your kind have, I believe, their own code of honour and morality.'

'Honour and morality ! What the deuce are you talking about ?' He paused, staring ; then : 'Look here, you know, you really are mixing me up with somebody else. I can swear I never defrauded a man or wronged a woman in my life.'

'There are various ways of injuring men, and women too,' said Peter in a muffled voice. 'Were you ever at a place called Monte Carlo ?'

Ralph gazed at him, more astonished than ever.

'At a place called Monte Carlo ? Yes, several times.'

Peter had fixed his burning eyes upon him expecting to see him

start, it might be, turn pale, under this home-thrust. But the handsome face before him still retained its expression of astonished, puzzled annoyance. Yes, gaze as he would, make the pause as portentous as he might, Peter could find no trace of emotion other than these : surprise—perplexity—vexation.

‘I believe you have actually forgotten!’ he exclaimed, bursting all at once into a harsh laugh.

Oh, how rare was this jest—rare and bitter. He thought of Nathalie with her warped nature, her whitened hair; he thought of himself, Keeper Hounsell—he alone knew the extent of the havoc which had been wrought in his life. And yonder, with delicate brows drawn together and chiselled lips parted, stood the author of the mischief, trying to remember which of the many trivial acts of his life could be held accountable for the situation!

‘Oh, it is rich!’ laughed Peter. ‘There, I have no more time to lose—I’ll wish you good-day, and I pray God I may never meet you again.’

He turned on his heel as he spoke, and strode off among the trees, leaving the other gazing after him.

CHAPTER XXV.

DAYS OF PETER’S LIFE.

‘PETER,’ said his wife, a few evenings afterwards, ‘you are not yourself—you have not been yourself lately; there is something the matter. Won’t you tell me?’

She was sitting at his feet in readiness for the accustomed lesson, but Peter had fallen into a deep muse with the book open on his knee.

He shut it quickly now, and looked down at her without speaking.

‘Is it,’ she went on timidly, ‘is it the old story? Poor Peter!’

‘It is the old story,’ he said, huskily; ‘but there’s something new, too. Do you remember the flowers which you took that day to—her?’

‘I remember,’ returned Prue, and her hand stole into his.

‘The other day I saw the man she imagined they came from.’

‘Oh! and did you?’ said Prue, faintly. She scrambled on to her knees and laid her cheek upon the clenched hand which her own was already clasping.

'He's a young man,' went on Peter, 'young and very handsome—as handsome as a picture——'

Prue jerked back her head incredulously.

'I do 'low,' cried she, 'he's not a bit better-looking nor you!'

In spite of his sore heart her husband laughed.

'That's a matter of opinion, isn't it? Anyhow, she didn't think so. The strange thing is'—here he grew grave again—'I believe the fellow has forgotten all about her.'

'Forgotten her! Then he can never have loved her.'

'But she loved him, Prue; that's the mischief. She loved him so well that the mere memory of him overshadows her whole life. She tried to love me—did I ever tell you that? She honestly tried, because she was so lonely, and because I——'

He broke off; Prue's cheek had dropped on his hand again, her loosened hair hid her face.

'When it came to the point, as you know,' he went on, 'she couldn't put up with me at any price. So you see two lives have been wrecked for the pleasure of the man who cannot now remember that she ever existed—two lives—I may say three.'

'How three?' asked Prue, from under her hair.

'Why yours, my poor child. If—if that man had been true to Nathalie I should never have seen her, and then I might have come to you with a free heart; I might have brought you a love—the sort of love you ought to have, Prue.'

'Oh, no,' said Prue, shaking back her hair, and squatting down on her heels, 'you mightn't have come to me at all then, Peter—I don't believe you would. You would have gone on living in your fine big house, and you'd—you'd—perhaps you'd have married some pretty young lady. Oh, don't pity me, Peter! I'd rather have things as they are—half a loaf is better than no bread.'

And with that she nodded sagely.

On a certain morning a letter came from Mrs. Meadway. She wrote pretty frequently, but her missives, as a rule, while they displayed considerable originality in the matter of orthography, were in other respects rigidly conformed to the traditions in which she had been educated. Thus her main object appeared to be to convey the slightest possible quantity of news with the utmost conceivable ambiguity of phrase.

But on this occasion the letter contained an announcement of importance.

After the opening sentence: 'Hopping you are quite well as

this leaves me at the present time likewise your dear husband an' I'm thankfull to say Father is no worse nor usal'—the good woman proceeded to inform her daughter that Miss Manvers had died during the previous week.

'Twas sudden at the last, but not unespected along of the old lady flicing in the face of providence with never haveing no doctors nor meddysins what was made for the likes of her as had plenty of money and no proper family to leave it to but my dear doughter what do you think Miss Manvers died onrepentant and only wishing she'd begun them outlandish goings on what killed her a few years earlier.'

'Wonderful old lady!' exclaimed Peter, as he and Prue deciphered this document together. 'It must have been a comfort to her to keep her faith in the Abbé Kneipp to the last. Perhaps she was right. If she had begun this treatment a little before she was eighty, the results might have been more successful.'

'Do you see what mother says here?' inquired Prue, who had been reading on, and who now looked up with a face that was almost scared.

'She was buried on Tuesday, we was all took by surprise to hear as she'd left everything to that young lady what come last year as calls herself Miss Manvers cusin, but Father an' me has our doubts, an' so has a good many more, she come from out a-broad an' don't look english nor yet speak it, and is not no christian as is plain to be seen by the way she goes to the popish chapel.'

Mrs. Meadway's comments were continued at some length, but at this point Peter ceased reading and turned away.

'I should think a certain fine gentleman will feel rather sold,' he remarked, caustically. 'It is a pity he was quite so wise. He would not marry Nathalie, you must know, Prue, because he thought her too poor. He will wish now he had been a little more far-seeing.'

'Oh, Peter,' cried his wife timidly, 'how bitter you are still! Can't you forgive him?'

'No, I can't!' he returned shortly; 'I can't forgive him or her either.'

Prue sighed.

'Don't let us talk of them any more,' said Peter. 'Let us forget them. It is much better to forget.'

But Prue sighed again as he went away.

Later on Mrs. Meadway wrote that young Miss Manvers had decided to shut up the Croft for the present and to go abroad until

the summer. The staff of servants was, however, to be maintained, and no alterations were to be made. Mrs. Meadway grudgingly admitted that the young lady was not turning out so bad, and piously hoped it might last.

Peter and Prue grew daily more at ease in each other's company, more in sympathy with each other's ways. The past was now never mentioned between them; the present in its placid uniformity seemed enough. But a day came when the thoughts of both turned to the future with new hope and tenderness.

It was late in March. Up there on the downs the leonine quality which marked the beginning of the month had made itself felt; the wind had raged among the trees, and sweeping over the uplands had hurled itself against the little dwelling, so that the doors shook and every casement rattled. But Prue kept ever a bright face and a glowing hearth, and Peter often declared that the battle with the storm without enhanced the comfort of his home-coming.

But now the gorse was ablow, and innumerable tiny blossoms winked upwards from the short grass at a fine breezy blue and white sky, and there were little sticky tassels on the larches, and crimson buds on sycamore and elder; from sheltered hollows of the woods the daffodils shone out gay and airy, and there were violets in mossy places, and here and there primroses in bud.

Peter was busy on this particular afternoon, and Prue had carried out his tea to him in the plantation. Sitting side by side in a sunny corner they had partaken of it together as gleefully as a pair of children.

'I wish we could do this every day,' said Prue, as she picked up her basket and prepared to go homewards.

'You are a perfect baby!' exclaimed her husband, laughing and pinching her cheek. 'You'd like to live in the woods always, wouldn't you? Why, of course, you told me you would like to be a wild woman.'

Prue set down her basket again and dropped beside him once more.

'It's quite early yet,' she said; 'let's sit still for just a few minutes, while you smoke your pipe.'

Peter consented, and lying back on the mossy turf he smoked for a few minutes in silence, idly watching the blue spirals that rose from his lips, and gazing up through the branches at the

bright sky. It was very still just there, that broken stillness of the woods which conveys above all the sense of solitude. Peter loved with an intimate affection every rustle of leafage, every clatter of swaying boughs and falling twigs, every flutter of wings. He loved, moreover, those sounds which indicated the stir and bustle of life at a distance great enough to enhance the quietude of the wood and yet near enough to harmonise with it. The tinkle of sheep-bells—the patter of small hurrying feet on the resonant ground—the cry of the peewits, the ecstatic piping of a lark. All these belonged to the world beyond this world of trees, the waste of down land, solitary too, but not with the intensity which prevailed here. And by his side sat the only other occupant of his leafy hermitage: little Prue, still as a mouse, mute, pensive—gazing at him with eyes as softly bright as those of any other forest creature.

‘A penny for your thoughts, Prue.’

She started, blushing vividly; then suddenly hid her face in her hands.

‘What were you thinking of?’ he persisted, sitting up and laying aside his pipe.

‘You’ll never guess!’ she replied, dropping her hands, but not venturing to return his look. ‘I—at that moment I was thinking of Nancy.’

‘Nancy!’ he repeated vaguely. Then, suddenly recollecting himself, ‘Your doll! Wasn’t I right to call you a baby? ’Tis a pity you buried that doll.’

‘I didn’t bury her,’ said Prue. ‘I was going to bury her that day—you know, Peter, when you came and asked me—’

She broke off and Peter nodded in silence. The remembrance of that day was painful to them both.

‘Well,’ said Prue, ‘after you were gone—I hadn’t the heart at first to do anything about it—about burying her I mean—and then I began to think if—if you and I were to be married, Peter—I’d better keep Nancy.’

‘Why?’ asked he.

He was not often so dull of wit.

‘Why, you see,’ went on Prue, very haltingly, and once more covering her poor little crimson face, ‘I thought, if we were married, we might have—we might have a little one of our own—and Nancy might come in useful.’

‘Oh, Prue!’ gasped Peter. ‘Oh, you queer little being.’

He stared at her, positively staggered by the absolute simplicity

of her outlook ; and she, jumping up in a great hurry, seized her basket and would have hurried away but that he, recovering his senses all at once, sprang also to his feet and intercepted her.

‘Prue,’ he cried, ‘my darling child, you mustn’t be vexed—you must finish telling me.’

‘Oh, but I can’t,’ sobbed she. ‘I can’t when you are so—so—oh, Peter, how could you say I was queer!’

‘I only meant that there is no one else like you in the world. My little Prue, you have more to say. Say it now, dear.’

And so, clinging to him, under the swaying fir-boughs, she told him her great secret, and thenceforth between the two there was a new understanding and a deeper tenderness.

(To be continued.)

Edward FitzGerald and his Friends.

IN this world of change and chance the outward circumstances of life are rarely indicative of character. The accidents of birth and fortune, professional engagements and domestic ties, are apt to leave but little choice as to where and how we are to live; but in Edward FitzGerald's case, his successive habitations, Wherstead, Boulge, Farlingay, Woodbridge, Aldborough, Little Grange, not only illustrate the volumes of his life, but have a real biographical interest and significance. It was but at rare intervals that he was long absent from the more or less remote and unknown corner of East Anglia where he had made his home. It is a land of level landscapes and cowslipped meadows, of pollarded trees and yellow cornfields, of leafy lanes leading to comfortable homesteads, of small old-world market towns and gabled village inns, and of still, wide rivers winding slowly to the sea. The coast, indeed, was never far distant from the country roads and fields along which he walked. Bredfield, his birthplace, is but two miles from Woodbridge,

Where it once discerned the smoke
Of old sea battles far away;
And victorious Nelson's topmasts
Anchoring in Hollesley Bay.
O'er the meadows that surround it
Broods the dusk of days gone by;
O'er the solemn woods that bound it
Ancient sunsets seem to die.
Through the cypress in the garden
Sighs the warning voice of old;
One same cuckoo calls afar off,
One same crocus breaks the mould.

From the churchyard at Wherstead, his home for ten years, may be seen the masts of the vessels which navigate the Orwell. Though at Woodbridge the shipping trade is almost extinct, there

is still a strong traditional flavour of the sea about its manners and customs, and the ample tidal river, with its barges and fishing-boats, seems to bring a message from the world at large to the narrow streets and leisurely market-place of the little town. All his life long an irresistible fascination drew him seawards; even in his later years a fresh North Sea breeze, as it filled the sails of his boat, brought with it an inspiriting sense of buoyancy and youth; but even the free ocean had for him a domestic charm. The long reaches of sand at Aldborough overhung by wind-swept cliffs, the fens and meres, the sparse vegetation of sterile land, were more or less desolate and depressing features of the coast, but to FitzGerald it was all dear by reason of its familiarity. He had played as a child upon the beach, he constantly visited it alone or with a friend, he would loiter for hours upon the rough quay watching the boats and talking to the fisherfolk. 'No sea,' he said, 'is like the sea at Aldborough. It talks to me.'

No man probably ever united an unhappy incapacity for domestic life with stronger domestic instincts. He was fond of the company of old ladies, and was pleased to call himself one of the Dowagers of Woodbridge, and it is certain that he possessed a feminine aptitude for making himself a home among the meanest and most incongruous surroundings. He loved Bredfield for its associations and Wherstead for its beauty, but in family houses, with their manorial rights and wealth of inherited treasures, he probably felt himself less at ease than in the various habitations of his own selection.

The thatched two-roomed cottage at Boulge, with walls 'as thin as a sixpence,' held his books, though many of them were piled upon the floor. He had some favourite pictures upon the walls, a bust of Shakespeare, his piano, an agreeable collection of manuscripts, pipes, and letters upon his table, and the hours as they glided by hardly troubled the even tenour of existence with unwelcome rumours from the world beyond. At Woodbridge, it is true, his lodgings over the gunsmith's shop, where he lived for thirteen years, looked out upon the market-place; and of the shifting drama of human life played out on this small stage he was no uninterested spectator. His neighbours and everyday associates were fishermen, tradesmen, and the village magnates of the district, and these, he wrote, 'are somehow the people who interest me'; 'real natural human gossip,' he declared, 'was as dear to him as to a woman.' On the other hand, he cared nothing for politics, which he looked upon with pessimistic eyes as a

game of chance from which no worthy or lasting good could be secured. 'Don't write politics,' he says, in a letter to Frederick Tennyson, 'I agree with you beforehand.' And, again, 'I never read a newspaper, and try to prevent anybody telling me anything.'

If his landlord, Mr. Berry, a person of weak amiability, had not engaged himself to a determined widow, FitzGerald might not have left his house, so much did he like the humours and stir of the market-place and his own sense of citizenship. But hearing that upon this occasion FitzGerald had stigmatised her prospective husband as 'Old Gooseberry,' the outraged widow took so serious a view of the harmless jest as to insist upon notice to quit being served upon the kindly lodger, who had often smoked a pipe in his landlord's kitchen, and to whose unstinted liberality Berry had been so long indebted. One cannot help hoping that, after this event, Mr. Berry may have found an embargo laid upon comfortable slippered enjoyment of fireside pipes, and may have proved, by painful personal experience, the justice of FitzGerald's verdict.

Little Grange, a small property outside the town, which he had bought some years before, had in the meantime been long ready to receive its owner, and after a short attempt at lodging elsewhere, FitzGerald took up his abode in the house in which the last nine years of his life were to be passed. Here he at once made a seclusion for himself, shutting the doors against any chance of luxurious living to which the comparative size of the house might have given rise. One large downstairs room, divided by folding doors, served as bedroom and study, while the entrance hall held the organ upon which he loved to play old well-remembered airs, movements from Handel or Mozart, or snatches of the Cavalier songs and madrigals which he had sung at college gatherings, melodies fraught with memories of glad, good fellowship and vanished joys. For this journal of still life had had a brilliant prologue, and none could then have imagined that the chief part of his existence would be passed within so small an area or that his exceptional gifts would bring no wider contemporaneous fame. At Cambridge he had been one of the band of young 'Apostles' who were to go forth to make their names known and honoured in very various departments of life and literature. Archbishop Trench, Monckton Milnes, Allen, afterwards archdeacon; Spedding, as Carlyle called him after the publication of his *Bacon*, 'the indefatigably patient, invincible, victorious Spedding,' even then the 'Socrates' of the group; and, above all, Thackeray, that most delightful of all companions—a fellow idler. Here in the seat of learning and high

thinking they carry on much pleasant literary fooling. They sing each other's verses and praises in one breath; and alike across the pungent wit of the future satirist and the calm and judicial reasoning of the philosopher there breaks the spontaneous laughter of gaiety and youth. They are all such good friends. More like schoolboys than young men who take themselves and each other seriously. Even to Allen, the student and Church dignitary, FitzGerald could write, 'The joy of meeting you puts me into that tip-top merriment that makes me sin,' for in this tip-top merriment at this time all were ready to take a part; their temper of mind contrasting curiously with that of the distinguished group of the Oxford Tractarians who were discoursing upon great theological questions and dogmas with scrupulous conscientiousness and measured words, Hurrell Froude alone affronting the proprieties with what Dean Church terms his 'disrespectful vocabulary.' At Cambridge Church problems were of less account, and these their contemporaries met in lighter mood, with minds less affected by reverence for established principles or ancient rights.

The friendships formed in these 'dawn-golden days' were destined, in FitzGerald's case, to stand, not only the test of time, but the severer one of very diverse circumstances and interests, and some lifelong separations; but for a while, at least, he kept up a constant intercourse with his college friends. It was after leaving Cambridge that he became acquainted with the Tennysons; Frederick, his lifelong correspondent, and Alfred, 'a sort of Hyperion.' He was a fellow-guest with him at the Speddings' house in the Lake country, and sat up at night to hear him read part of his 1842 volume of poems, the *Morte d'Arthur*, *The Lord of Burleigh*, *Dora*, &c., out of a little red-bound MS. book. FitzGerald called it 'the butcher's book,' but showed his real reverence for its contents in a very practical manner by saving some pages from the fire and bestowing them upon the library of Trinity College, Cambridge. The poems, recited in a voice 'like the sound of a far-off sea or of a pine wood,' effectually lulled his critical faculties to rest, and he expresses himself as 'occasionally experiencing a sense of depression from the overshadowing of a so much more lofty intellect than his own.'

When in London he lodged by preference in the proximity of the British Museum, sometimes in Southampton Row or Charlotte Street, and here there were many of those meetings to which in after-years he looked back as marking red-letter days in life's

calendar—days when Thackeray would ‘come singing into his rooms,’ and he with ‘Spedding the wise, my sheet-anchor,’ Frank Edgeworth, younger brother to the great Maria, Brookfield the melancholy humourist, the Tennysons, and other friends and contemporaries, would dine together at the Cock, in Fleet Street, all united in a happy intimacy in which the ready recognition of intellectual superiority never lessened the freedom of affectionate intercourse, but jests passed lightly across the profundity of thought like sparkles of sunlight upon deep waters. The very names by which they were known to one another tell us something of the terms upon which they stood. Dr. Johnson’s calling Goldsmith ‘Goldy,’ Hazlitt somewhat sententiously assures us, ‘did equal honour to both.’ FitzGerald, ‘Old Fitz,’ is certainly not inappropriately addressed by Tennyson as ‘Fitz-crochet.’ ‘Old Brookes’ (Brookfield), as we all know, ‘loved to mouth his rhymes,’ Thackeray is ‘Willy,’ and Thackeray, even ventures, for some reason best known to himself, to refer to the philosophic Spedding as ‘Monsieur Jem.’

Already, in 1830, Thackeray and FitzGerald had in Paris spent much of their time together. They had thrown all the traditions of the intelligent sightseer to the winds, abjured guide-books and historical research, passed their mornings at the Louvre, where Thackeray made a desultory study of art, and FitzGerald chiefly admired the statues, especially ‘a lovely and very modest Venus.’ They loitered on the Boulevards, listened to street singers, dined at cafés, and found Paris to be an enchanting place full of green leaves and sunshine. These agreeable memories may have been partly responsible for a suggestion which Thackeray made a year or two later, that they should take a château in Normandy, ‘fit it up in the old style, live in it after the manner of Orestes and Pylades,’ and be lost for a year to the world. But though FitzGerald was already beginning to feel a distaste for society and a disposition to be a ‘Great Bear,’ this project was never carried into effect, and the castle in Normandy, like many other castles in the air, was destined never to be inhabited.

In 1841 he had entered upon the life of rural seclusion from which he was to be drawn but at intervals, and, as a rule, for short periods of time. ‘Day follows day with unvaried movement,’ so he writes from Boulge; ‘there is the same level meadow with geese upon it always lying before my eyes, the same pollard oaks, with now and then the butcher and the washerwoman, trundling by in their carts.’ He was as yet, perhaps, too young to

feel that personal interest in the butcher and the washerwoman which so curiously relieved the monotony of his after-life. Their figures in the foreground could not redeem the landscape from dulness, and yet he had no energy to seek new scenes, no desire to receive new impressions.

'Snug firesides, the low-built roof, parlours ten by ten, frugal boards, and all the homeliness of home—these were the conditions of my birth, the wholesome soil which I was planted in.' So Charles Lamb wrote; but these were not the conditions of FitzGerald's birth, but of his adoption. He had a strange predilection for a sort of back-parlour comfort. Already before he had reached middle age he had bidden a long and deliberate farewell, not only to the world of society, but to any frequent personal intercourse with that inner circle of intellectual men who had been the dear and chosen intimates of his youth. With ample means and leisure at his disposal, his temperament irresistibly impelled him to a life of inaction and retirement. It is idle to speculate whether enforced labour in any other department might not have awakened more literary activity, but it is interesting to find such very dissimilar persons as Byron and Charles Lamb, in letters of advice to Bernard Barton, the bookseller poet, extolling the advantages of the ledger and the desk in the interests of poetical authorship. Byron cites Rogers, 'the first of living poets,' as owing his position not so much to his poetry as to his respectability and prudence in the mercantile world, and Charles Lamb cries with an affectionate candour at which no man could take offence, 'Sit down, good B. B., in the banking office. What! is there not from 6 to 11 P.M., six days in the week, and is there not all Sunday? Fie, what a superfluity of man's time, if you could but think so,' and he thanks Providence that he himself was settled upon the solid foundations of Leadenhall. 'Welcome, dead timber of a desk that gives me life.' FitzGerald himself, with an earnestness possibly born of the consciousness of misused time and wasted opportunities, gave like counsel when consulted by a parent as to a boy's future. 'Never mind his being a first-rate scholar, but make him, if you can, choose a profession and stick to it. There is no happiness but with some settled plan of *action* before one. . . . Are only those of us to remain who read, write, and dream?' As time went on he did not, indeed, cease to dream, and his dreams were most often of the past; but the links which bound him to those bygone days were those of affection rather than of intellectual sympathy. As he said himself, 'his friendships were more like loves,' attractions

and instincts which had grown into habits of the mind and heart, to which he clung with unalterable fidelity.

Tennyson's earlier poetry had come to him with all the force of an inspired revelation, it dwelt in his memory and consoled his solitude; but as time went on he failed to follow in the track of his genius. It led to strange and unknown heights which he had no desire to scale. 'Blow, bugle, blow,' was the only one of the *Princess* songs to which he accorded unbounded and uncritical admiration; he was 'afraid that *In Memoriam* might make us all sentimental,' and the later poems had lost for him, as he affirmed, 'the old champagne flavour,' though he lamented that he had not recorded Tennyson's prose sayings, the deepest he had ever heard uttered. But he had loved the man in the poet, rather than the poet in the man, and Tennyson's last chance visit to Little Grange in 1876 was one of those events which once more shed the stronger sunshine of the past over the narrowed limits of his life. 'He came to me,' FitzGerald writes, 'after near twenty years' separation, and we were in a moment as if we had been together all that while.' It is a pleasant picture of the meeting of the old friends in the sunny autumn garden, where FitzGerald sits remote from the world with his doves circling about his head, and is still to the companion of his youth

Old Fitz, who from your suburb grange,
Where once I tarried for awhile,
Glance at the wheeling Orb of change,
And greet it with a kindly smile.

the same as

When in our younger London days,
You found some merit in my rhymes,
And I more pleasure in your praise.

Among all the treasured portraits in memory's picture-gallery there is not one which FitzGerald has suffered the rude touch of time to efface or dim. Over and over again, in those letters which so pleasantly reunite him to the absent, his true, if trembling, hand retraces or sketches afresh each well-known likeness. He can be at once an adverse critic and an indulgent friend. He found Thackeray's books 'terrible,' he looked at them upon the shelf, and was half afraid to touch them; but he never forgot the words of 'noble kindness' in which Thackeray took leave of him before he sailed for America, when he wrote of 'that recollection of our youth when we loved each other, as I do now, when I write Fare-

well.' In Thackeray's seasons of struggle and sadness he had brought him all the aid in his power; not only orders for drawings, but ungrudging sympathy and encouragement. Sometimes in the silent evening hours he is surprised to find how much he is thinking about him; and after his death 'sits moping,' and reads *Pendennis* over again, and likes it better than at first, as he 'keeps hearing him say so much of it.' He describes himself as 'an idle fellow of a very ladylike turn of sentiment'; in other words, he gives us very characteristic glimpses of a woman's tenderness and constancy.

Though he never wearied of Scott's novels, and could read *Clarissa Harlowe* for the fifth time, his own literary instinct was to condense and curtail. He found fault with the over-elaboration of Tennyson's poetry, and lamented the years which Spedding had wasted on his colossal vindication of Bacon. They very rarely met, not once for twenty years before his death, yet what a true note of friendship is sounded over his grave! 'He did not want to see me, he wanted nothing, I think, but I was always thinking of him, and should have done till my own life's end. . . . I wake almost every morning feeling I have lost something as one does in a dream, and truly I have lost *him*.'

Again, his friendship for Carlyle was neither kindled nor quickened by the fire of his genius. He did 'not like to live in the house with poor Carlyle's raving book about heroes. It smoulders.' He disliked his 'uncouth works,' and called him the great prophet of the Gurgoyne School, though Carlyle might have been consoled by his likening him to Victor Hugo, whom he found equally disagreeable. But a strong personal attraction was not inconsistent with literary prejudices. He disliked 'bonerummaging,' and feared Carlyle would make a demigod of Cromwell; but he gladly spent much time and labour in his service identifying the ground at Naseby, so as to furnish him with a correct plan of the battlefield. Mutual interest in this subject drew them together, and Carlyle visited him in the country in delightful sunny harvest weather, collecting material for his Frederick by reading Voltaire under an elm-tree and spending the evenings in sociably smoking with his host, 'a lonely, shy, kind-hearted man' whom he soon learnt to call 'good Fitz.' These ten days constituted the longest period of personal intercourse, but FitzGerald never ceased to write to Carlyle until the day when his heart followed him to his grave at Ecclefechan. In the last year of his own life he paid one of his rare visits to London, went to Chelsea

to see the statue of his friend, and then, standing outside the empty, deserted house in Cheyne Row, thinking of the domestic tragedy which had been wrought out there and of his own unhappy married life, he turned away silently and in tears.

Tennyson, Thackeray, Spedding, Carlyle—the names stand out in the list of his friends by reason of their pre-eminence in literature—but others there were, of very different orders, all alike high in the ranks of friendship. Though he had no ecclesiastical sympathies, and the only religious ministrations which appear to have made an impression upon him were those of the revivalist preacher Matthews at Bedford Chapel, whose eloquence he felt certain must have surpassed that of Peter the Hermit, he was singularly rich in clerical intimates. Dean Blakesley, Archdeacon Allen, Brookfield, Archbishop Trench, belonged to the Cambridge group. Groome, Archdeacon of Suffolk, was one of his most appreciative companions; and the Crabbes, George the second, Vicar of Bradfield, George the third, Rector of Merton, had the strongest hereditary claims upon his regard as the son and grandson of the poet; Caroline Crabbe, a tall girl with fair curls, daughter of George the second, being most appropriately the first and only object of his unrequited love. With her father he had throughout his life much in common. An unaffected disregard of public opinion and ordinary conventionalities, an indiscriminate inclination to minister to those in poverty or distress, and a preference for a little dreary study named the ‘Cobblery,’ in which they shut themselves up together in clouds of tobacco smoke, the atmosphere being lightened by sudden flashes of wit from the host which earned him the nickname of the ‘Radiator.’ For twenty-two years FitzGerald found so much pleasure in his society that he forgave him for not taking the trouble to read his father’s poems until he had reached middle age. He wrote his life, but, like FitzGerald himself, he would never have accomplished a filial duty because it was expected of him.

‘Our Donne,’ W. Bodham Donne, his old schoolfellow, was a friend of a different stamp, accomplished and scholarly, who shared with Spedding his ‘oldest and deepest love,’ but like Spedding he had, as he conceived, wasted his literary abilities in writing a voluminous history of Rome which was never completed. Their intercourse was necessarily infrequent, though he was one of those for whom he would make an effort to quit his own arm-chair, lay aside his volume of Madame de Sévigné’s ‘Letters,’ the perennial Waverley novel, or even some Eastern manuscript,

and step out from the 'faded tapestry' of provincial life to find himself again beneath an old friend's roof. His friendship with Professor Cowell and his wife, a true and enduring one, is part of the history of *Omar Khayyám*, upon which we have no space to enter; but earlier in his life there had come across his path a figure which must not be forgotten—a figure in a scarlet coat with bright blue eyes and a ready smile, more often to be met with in the hunting-field than in a study among dusty folios—William Kenworthy Browne, whose characteristics FitzGerald sketched with so sympathetic a hand as Phidippus in *Euphranor*. As the young Squire of Godlington, he united strong common-sense and practical abilities to a true and discerning love of art, but apparently what most attracted FitzGerald was his youthful indomitable spirit, the very spring of strenuous life. FitzGerald prophesied that he would never grow old, and his words were fulfilled in a sense which he could hardly have borne to anticipate. An accident in the hunting-field, and he was brought home to die after eight weeks of heroic suffering. It was perhaps the sharpest sorrow of FitzGerald's life. There had been the glamour of youth about this friendship. Chivalrous, direct, fearless, the favourite of fortune, with his strong young hands full of worthy work and overflowing happiness, Browne had been more of a hero to him than any other of his friends. With his tragic death a black shadow fell across the sunlight. He hastened at once to the house, but his fortitude failed him at the old affectionate whispered words of greeting, when at last they dared admit him to the presence of the dying man. He was literally broken to pieces and lay in unspeakable agony, but nothing could quench his courage. Apparently fearful lest FitzGerald should reproach himself for his weakness, he said, as if in extenuation, 'I suppose you have scarce ever been with a dying person before,' and two days later, as FitzGerald expresses it, 'gave up his honest ghost.' FitzGerald's numerous letters to his widow have been carefully preserved; they might have been written by a woman. They have his own spontaneous indescribable charm of diction and many characteristic touches, but they have another and tenderer interest as, entering into every detail of her daily life, they unconsciously unveil for us the fittest monument of constancy to the memory of his friend.

Mrs. Kenworthy Browne was not his only woman correspondent. Though he had a prejudice against women who had stepped out from the ordinary path to earn for themselves a literary reputation

or public recognition, and was apt to refer to the more pressing necessity that they should sit at home and mend their stockings, Fanny Kemble, whom he had known from childhood, was one of his most valued friends. Far as their paths lay apart, they had various interests and tastes in common (notably their taste for gaudy colouring, which accounts for FitzGerald's assertion that a flame-coloured nasturtium was his favourite flower); he took trouble to visit her in her old age, and found her honest, cheerful, truthful as ever, in a London drawing-room full of purple cushions, and he wrote to her long, constant, and delightful letters.

In truth his disastrous marriage hardly gives a fair impression of his relations with women. Lucy Barton, an exemplary house-keeper and judicious district visitor, with settled opinions, and a conscientious if overweening regard for propriety and order, was manifestly unfitted to be the wife of an eccentric recluse. Over and over again, FitzGerald assures us, he was mainly responsible for the miseries of a position which, after a trial of only six months, was acknowledged by both parties to be unbearable. An easy and intermittent intercourse with the dowagers of Woodbridge had by no means prepared him for the restraints of married life, nor for the necessary readjustment of the habits of a lifetime. Wretched and ill at ease, he became unreasonably and angrily intolerant, was fretted by her methodical ways and undeniable virtues, and even averred that her consumption of underdone meat verged upon cannibalism!

Yet he was not only good-humoured but over-indulgent to his dependents—that large circle of friends who played by no means subordinate parts upon the stage at Woodbridge: sea captains, boy-readers, fishermen; Barton the poet, Mr. Berry the gunsmith, John Howe the King of Clubs, Mary Howe the Fairy God-mother his servants; Joseph Fletcher, 'Posh,' whom he seriously spoke of to Tennyson as one of the greatest of men, and many others: they are not mere scene-shifters, but important personages, whose well-meant efforts he is ready to applaud, whose shortcomings he can regard with friendly indulgence, even those of his sometimes half-illiterate boy-readers, especially the one nicknamed 'the Blunderer,' who after his own fashion improved the text; for instance, facsimiles of letters are 'face-smiles' and 'consolations' 'close at 91.' 'He gets dreadfully tired,' FitzGerald indulgently observes, 'and so do I,' and upon these occasions he would himself descend into the pantry and bring up plum cake and temperance drinks for their mutual refreshment.

His disregard of class distinctions had been instinctive rather than acquired, and it is recorded that one evening in earlier days, when in a smoking-room some vulgar braggart had wearied and annoyed him by much talk of his acquaintance with the rich and great, after lighting his candle FitzGerald turned at the door, looked back at the party, and said, softly and dejectedly, 'I, too, once knew a lord—but he is dead,' and then silently withdrew. The rebuke came well from a man to whom the world's verdicts were of little account, but unhappily he failed to perceive that though 'all men might have professional tricks, and no profession from a bishop to a shoeblick is without them,' his needier intimates had most temptation to take advantage of his open purse and careless generosity. He might indeed in his youth safely assure Tennyson that, though it is very difficult to persuade people in this world that you can part with a banknote without a pang, it was to him the simplest thing in the world, and he vowed to the Lord he could not have a greater pleasure than in transferring it to him; but it was hardly wise to proclaim his indifference to banknotes to those who considered themselves to be in urgent and legitimate need of them. Every now and again he is forced to silence a mis-giving. 'I shall have lived near sixty years looking at men's faces and their ways if this man deceives me.' . . . 'He may live to let Interest overgrow Honour. . . . I think his conscience will last my time.' And throughout life he had acted on Charles Lamb's advice, 'Rake not into the bowels of unwelcome truth to save a halfpenny.' Yet who can doubt that his real goodness of heart, his unsuspecting dealings, and his forbearing generosity, earned for him a gratitude and affection often denied to the substantial benefactor or enlightened philanthropist?

The last nine years of his life were passed almost uninterruptedly at Little Grange. He had long ceased to desire a prolonged existence, and only asked of death that it might not be slow. His wish was granted. On the 14th of June, 1883, he passed away peacefully in his sleep in the house of George Crabbe, the son of his old friend, the grandson of his best-loved poet, and the brother of his only love. In the words of the epilogue to *Tiresias* which became his epitaph, he had gone into

A clearer day
Than our poor twilight dawn on earth,

through which, indeed, he had in life seen spiritual truths but dimly ;

his attitude towards them being one of undefined and passive melancholy.

Most fitly upon his tomb was engraved the text which he had often been heard murmuring to himself, and in which, in the midst of the contradictions and enigmas of life, he had found most comfort : ' It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.'

ELEANOR A. TOWLE.

The Torchrunners.

TO FRANCIS COUTTS.

POET, you question why the Spirit's fire
Should ever pale, and why the heart's desire
To touch the stars is still by earth-ties bound—
In your own mind is not the answer found ?

From age to age, from mighty name to name,
The runners still bear on the sacred flame,
Not theirs to faint, not theirs to plead for rest—
Is not the torch an answer to your quest ?

The flame is live, the flame shall never die,
The soul of Man and of Eternity,
Since of your race may never one forget
His task appointed—are you answered yet ?

With eyes downcast from trouble-blinded sight
The riddle still you strive to read aright ?
Look up ! See, through the wildering wrack of care,
The flame that calls you—read your answer there !

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

An Uncharted Reef.

I.

THE steamship *Carpentaria*, ten days out from Hong-Kong on her voyage to Australian ports, was waddling along over the oily swell of a tropical sea at the twelve-knot rate of speed which is generally considered adequate in latitudes where few people are so regardless of health and comfort as to be in a hurry. The sun had just set, and the passengers—for the most part Australians, returning home from business or pleasure trips—had gathered together on deck, talking, smoking, or preparing to play bridge; for they had grown friendly and intimate, as fellow-passengers are wont to do after upwards of a week of enforced juxtaposition. The one exception to the rule, a very pretty, fair-haired girl, who slowly dragged her deck-chair away from the others, in accordance with what had been her practice since the first day of sailing, was therefore as conspicuous as she perhaps wished to appear.

This was Miss Margery Kaye, going out to Sydney all by herself to be married to a young New South Wales squatter, and the ladies on board, who had begun by being interested in her, would gladly have shown her any kindness in their power, had she deigned to respond to their well-meant advances. But she had chosen to turn up her pretty little nose at them in a manner so unequivocal that they had been obliged to leave her to herself. Consequently, she did not enjoy a very large measure of popularity. Who, after all, was she, these good ladies not unnaturally asked, to give herself such airs? The orphaned niece of a Shanghai merchant, who was not even particularly wealthy, and who had not troubled himself to escort her to her destination. It is true that she had aristocratic relations in England, with whom she had made her home until the death of one of them had compelled her, much against her will, to accept the avuncular protection in China; but her fellow-passengers did not know that, nor, if they had, would they have seen in the circumstance an excuse for bad manners.

Miss Margery was very far from imagining that her manners were bad. On the other hand, she thought that theirs were, and she said so—for the fiftieth time, perhaps—to the handsome, dark-complexioned man who presently strolled up and joined her.

'How odious these women are!' she exclaimed impatiently. 'They have given up speaking to me, thank goodness, but they never seem to tire of staring and whispering.'

Mr. De Vaux laughed, as he lighted his cigar.

'Oh, well,' said he tolerantly, 'they have never been taught better. Besides——'

'What?' asked Miss Kaye in a rather sharp voice.

If he had been upon the point of saying 'We have given them some reason to stare and whisper,' he thought better of it. As he was the only person in the ship, except the good-natured old captain, with whom Miss Kaye had condescended to converse; as he had conversed with her daily and at great length during the long, hot, calm voyage from Manila through the spice islands of the Malay Archipelago; as, in short, he had been maintaining what had every appearance of a pronounced flirtation with her, he could not but be aware that his conduct and hers had been remarked upon, and possibly the knowledge was not altogether disagreeable to him. But he had found out that she could administer an exceedingly direct snub when annoyed, and he was not at all fond of being snubbed; so he ended his sentence quite harmlessly with—

'Besides, it doesn't matter.'

'Oh, of course it doesn't *matter*,' the girl somewhat peevishly assented. 'Lots of things that don't matter are rather a bore while they last, though.'

'Such as the present voyage and your present humble neighbour, eh?'

He pulled up a deck-chair beside hers and extended himself at full length upon it with the air of one comfortably assured of his welcome. That may have been why he did not receive the invited contradiction.

'I hate steamy, sticky heat,' she said; 'I hate cramped cabins and the disgusting sort of food that one gets on board ship. It would be a detestable voyage even if it were not going to end in Australia.'

De Vaux smiled indulgently. 'Poor Australia! I won't attempt its defence, especially as your first impressions are bound to be so unfavourable. From Thursday Island, where we ought to arrive to-morrow morning, right away down to Brisbane—a

thousand miles or more of parched, barren, dreary coast—it looks like an uninhabited land, and one feels that it ought to be.’

‘Oh, I quite feel that about Australia already!’ Miss Kaye emphatically declared.

At this her companion laughed outright. He had very white, regular teeth, which he was fond of exhibiting.

‘I won’t undertake to defend the Australians either,’ said he; ‘one has to get accustomed to their ways, which aren’t ours. Sydney isn’t so bad, though. Any amount of hospitality and that sort of thing, and often there are nice people staying at Government House. People whom one knows, I mean.’

Probably Mr. De Vaux, despite his personal advantages, might have failed to find favour with the fastidious Miss Margery if he had not happened to know such a number of people whom she knew. Very soon after he had first availed himself of an excuse to accost her she had discovered that he was in touch with the leaders of a society which, since her own severance from it, had acquired for her the charm and glamour which are apt to attach to all forfeited things. Two years of London, Cowes, Newmarket, Scotland, and country-house life in a famous hunting district had not realised her girlish conception of earthly bliss; but after six months of Shanghai she could not but appreciate the company of a fellow-creature who spoke a certain familiar language, who was acquainted with a hundred trivialities relating to persons high up in the world, who spoke familiarly of the Duke of A. and Lady B. and others who, although not specially interesting or lovable in themselves, had become so to an exile by reason of what they symbolised.

Now, lest all this should make poor little Miss Margery seem something of a snob, let it at once be added that she had after the most convincing fashion established her claim to a soul above worldly distinctions. For, in spite of several advantageous offers, backed up by the insistence of her family, she had remained obstinately faithful to impecunious Tom Bedingfield, who had won her heart before she was out of the schoolroom. Impecunious Tom, to whom she was not allowed to call herself engaged, but with whom she could not be prevented from corresponding, was despatched to some cousins in New South Wales to make his fortune, and the extraordinary thing is that he actually made it. He must have had great luck or great ability, or both; for very soon after Margery’s transfer from England to China he was in a position to prove to the Shanghai uncle that he could perfectly well afford to marry.

What he could not, at that particular juncture, afford to do was to absent himself from Australia ; so, as the upshot of many epistolary *pourparlers*, the constant Margery had been consigned to certain friends of her uncle's in Sydney who had kindly offered her hospitality until her wedding-day. Constant she had been through thick and thin to her childish romance, although those who had had charge of her generally preferred to call her wayward ; and it must be admitted that she was not wholly undeserving of that epithet.

Her fellow-passengers were disposed to say even more unflattering things of her. To-night, on the conclusion of a rubber of bridge, one of them, disapprovingly surveying the couple in the distance, said to her neighbour :

'It is becoming a positive scandal ! For the girl's own sake, some notice should be taken of it. Don't you think, Mrs. Harrison, that you might give her a hint ?'

'I might,' answered Mrs. Harrison, a stout old lady who always wore gold-rimmed spectacles, 'if I had two noses. Only possessing one, which I can't spare, I would rather not have it snapped off. Some days ago I did venture upon a very mild word of warning, and I was at once given to understand that by avoiding contentious topics I should diminish my risk of an attack of heat-apoplexy.'

'Insolent little wretch ! What did you say ?'

Mrs. Harrison laughed good-humouredly. 'There was nothing particular to say that I could think of ; so I said nothing. Perhaps that was rather a disappointment to her. She will end by finding Mr. De Vaux another, I suspect ; for the man is not a gentleman.'

That was just what Miss Margery would have affirmed that he was, and very likely she considered herself a rather better judge of such matters than old Mrs. Harrison, to whom she had taken a strong dislike. To be sure, some very strait-laced persons might think that a gentleman should not avow, or even insinuate, to an engaged girl that he adores her ; but, as a matter of fact, it is exceptional for any man who adores any woman to keep her in complete ignorance of his sentiments, and Mr. De Vaux had scarcely transgressed the limits of insinuation. One evening he had sung to her (he had an exquisite tenor voice) a few heartrending ballads which may have been meant to bear a special application to her case and his own ; once or twice he had alluded to the tragedy which arises when the currents of two lives cross one another too late to mingle ; once or twice his great melting eyes had said

unutterable things ; but that was all. He had behaved, upon the whole, extremely well, and really she did not think that she herself had behaved at all badly. It might look rather like behaving badly to give him her hand now, on wishing him good-night, and to let him raise it to his lips ; but that little demonstration was not so much a concession to him as a defiance to the watchful group in which Mrs. Harrison's gleaming spectacles were a prominent feature.

II.

By the time that Margery, who was a late riser, emerged on deck, the next morning, the *Carpentaria* had been lying at anchor for some hours in the glassy, hill-enclosed waters of Thursday Island, that northernmost point of Australia which may prove of strategic importance at some future date. Margery, caring little about any future but her own, and not altogether enamoured of that (for was not this coming marriage of hers to a man upon whom she had not set eyes for three whole years something of a leap in the dark ?), made an unappreciative grimace at the tropical vegetation around her, groaned at the overpowering heat, noted with satisfaction that everybody had gone ashore, and was preparing to instal herself in the shade with a novel, when a tall young man in white flannels sprang forward and enfolded her in a rapturous embrace.

'Couldn't resist taking a holiday and coming to meet you,' he explained, 'when I heard that there was a northward-bound steamer which would get me here just in time to catch the *Carpentaria* and return to Sydney in her. Wasn't it luck ?'

She was fain to reply, with a tremulous little laugh, that it was ; fain to confess to herself that she was very, very glad to feel her Tom's strong arms round her once more. Dear Tom ! not a bit changed, except that he was somewhat broader and browner than of yore. He had not grown a beard, for which she was thankful ; his blue eyes were as clear as ever, and he had kept his boyish voice. A fine representative of well-grown Anglo-Saxon youth, for the rest, and one who would have had no cause to fear comparisons, had she been disposed to draw any. But for the moment she had clean forgotten Mr. De Vaux, as well as her prejudice against Australia and other sources of discontent. Hers was not a capacious mind, and there was no room for anything in it now save the joy of reunion, of renewed vows, of discovering (priceless discovery so rarely vouchsafed to poor mortals !) that the dead past was not really dead at all, but had merged itself into the living present.

So by the space of two hours or more these young people were entirely happy, notwithstanding the crushing heat and the attacks of winged insects and the ceaseless rattle of the steam-winch, lowering or taking on cargo.

In the nature of things, happiness of that unmixed character must be transient. The return on board of chattering, perspiring fellow-passengers was, of course, a nuisance ; but still more annoying was it to Miss Margery to find that Tom was very well acquainted with old Mrs. Harrison, whom he greeted boisterously. Mrs. Harrison, of all people ! Well, after the passage of arms to which allusion has been made, it was impossible to speak to the woman ; so Margery had to seek her cabin and make ready for luncheon, thus, as she fully realised, giving her enemy a fine opportunity to blacken her character. When she slipped into the seat at a small side-table in the saloon which she had occupied throughout the voyage, Tom had already taken possession of the chair next to hers, although a prior claim upon it was vested in Mr. De Vaux, who had not yet appeared. For a moment Margery thought of mentioning this, but, upon further consideration, decided to await developments, and said, instead :

‘ I wish you didn’t know that hateful old woman ! Where did you pick her up ? ’

‘ Mrs. Harrison, do you mean ? ’ asked Tom wonderingly. ‘ Oh, I met her in Sydney last winter heaps of times. She’s an awfully good old sort, really. ’

‘ I thought her pushing and impertinent, ’ said Margery, with finality.

Now, when one woman speaks like that about another, every experienced man drops the subject. But Tom Bedingfield, who was little versed in woman’s ways, and who could not bear his friends to be misjudged, must needs take up the cudgels on Mrs. Harrison’s behalf with uncalled-for warmth ; and although the good lady had not breathed a word to him about his *fiancée’s* conduct, he certainly gave the impression that she had when he said :

‘ She’s a bit blunt, I admit ; but I like her all the better for that. And you won’t often find her wrong in her views either, I can tell you. ’

‘ I doubt whether she will have many opportunities of giving me her views, ’ returned Margery coldly. ‘ If she has been favouring you with them, I daresay you can guess why she won’t. ’

It was at this not very opportune juncture that Mr. De Vaux strolled up and gazed with bland, courteous inquiry at his

supplanter. Naturally the two men had to be made known to one another, and if Margery had been in a better humour she might have derived some inward amusement and enjoyment from the spectacle of their prompt mutual hostility. As it was, she felt a little angry with them both, especially so with Tom, whose demeanour towards the stranger was aggressive.

'I've got your seat, I believe,' said he. 'The steward told me it was yours, but I made so bold as to ask him to find another one for you. The fact is that I'm engaged to be married to Miss Kaye ; so you can understand——'

The explanation might be sufficient ; but the tone in which it was conveyed sounded intentionally uncivil. De Vaux's slightly raised eyebrows showed plainly enough what he thought of Mr. Bedingfield, although he declared himself only too delighted to oblige Miss Kaye in any way. Perhaps he thought that he was obliging Miss Kaye by placing himself opposite to her and thus putting a stop to her colloquy with her bearish betrothed. If he did, she lost no time in confirming his impression ; for she at once gave her whole attention to him, and began to converse with much animation about divers past incidents of the voyage, respecting which a new-comer could have nothing to say. That was her way of punishing Tom for the offence—which he had not committed—of listening to malevolent gossip. The young man's face, at first perplexed, then reproachful, finally displeased and accusing, did not give her pause. On the contrary, the sharp little stabs of compunction which she experienced every now and again about the region of the heart only goaded her on to make provocative speeches, until at last she had the mingled satisfaction and misery of perceiving that she had revealed herself to him in an entirely new light.

The adage relating to lovers' quarrels would have no truth in it if quarrels and reconciliations were not almost invariably the work of women. The delightful process of 'making it up again,' so dear to the feminine heart, is seldom contemplated as imminent by an unhappy man who has been moved to anger, and Tom did not attempt to follow Miss Margery, after luncheon, when she walked forward, without looking at him, attended by Mr. De Vaux, who carried her sun-umbrella and her book. He fell back sorrowfully upon Mrs. Harrison ; but Mrs. Harrison said she was going to have forty winks, and so he was left to the tender mercies of certain other ladies, who esteemed it at once a duty and a pleasure to inform him of things which they would have done better to keep to themselves.

Margery, vexed and disappointed by a desertion which she had not foreseen, proceeded, after the manner of her sex, to take vengeance upon Mr. De Vaux, whose concerned, compassionate face and soothing murmurs deserved indeed the rebuffs that they earned for him. He was allowed to sit close to Miss Kaye's elbow; but she had no idea of allowing him to pity her, nor, after the first few minutes, did she even pay him the compliment of listening to what he said. At the end of an hour she rose, yawning, with the air of one too cruelly bored to disguise the fact any longer.

'I am going up on the bridge to talk to the skipper,' she announced, and promptly suited the action to the word.

Captain Mills, who allowed certain favoured persons access to a part of the ship from which passengers in general were excluded, had never granted that privilege to Mr. De Vaux. It might be assumed, indeed, that he did not particularly wish to be bothered by anybody just then; for the *Carpentaria* had been for some time picking her way through the difficult and intricate navigation of Torres Straits, that maze of rocks and islets which lies between the Australian coast and the Great Barrier Reef, upon which the Pacific rollers break ceaselessly. At the sight of the young lady, however, a welcoming smile spread itself over his broad, grey-bearded face.

'Not a bit of it! Very glad to see you,' was his reply to her apology. 'We're in charge of the pilot now, so I've nothing to do. Sit down and run your eye over the chart; it's worth looking at.'

It certainly was worth study, both as evidence of the necessity for the pilot's services and as a testimony to the minute accuracy of the surveys which had resulted in its production.

'What I can't understand,' was Margery's comment upon the bewildering tract of dotted lines and figures displayed to her, 'is that any vessel should ever manage to wriggle between such a succession of traps at all.'

Captain Mills laughed. 'Old Cook sailed the whole way down inside the Barrier Reef when the passage hadn't been surveyed,' he remarked.

'How in the world did he do it?'

'Well—by being Captain Cook, I suppose. Of course he ran risks; but I take it that he was pretty cautious. And naturally he dropped anchor every evening, same as we shall to-night. You can't be too careful in these waters, charts or no charts.'

He went on to tell of numerous disasters which had occurred in that vicinity through lack of vigilance, adding :

'There are such things as uncharted reefs, too ! These coral islands that you see are all more or less on the move, some crumbling away, others being slowly built up. You don't run into dangers off which you're warned by lightships and buoys, unless you're a born fool ; it's the uncharted reefs that you must keep a sharp look-out for.'

'But how can you look out for them if they are invisible and not on the chart ?' Margery objected.

'Ah, that's what Captain Cook knew. We can't all be Captain Cooks ; but we've all got to shape a course through life, Miss Kaye, and I shouldn't wonder if there was quite a fair number of young ladies with eyes sharp enough to see below the surface. Supposing they took the trouble to use 'em, that is.'

He spoke with intention, having a liking for the girl, and being a shrewd old fellow who noticed more things than he cared to talk about ; but, not being prepared to set her on her guard in so many words against De Vaux, a man whose record was by no means immaculate, he now gave another turn to the conversation by inviting her to enter the chart-room and drawing her attention to the barometer.

'Did ever you know the glass drop two inches and three-tenths in six hours ?' he asked.

Margery shook her head, having seldom watched the movements of the barometer.

'Is that very extraordinary of it ?' she inquired. 'What does it mean ?'

'Cyclone,' answered the captain laconically. 'You can see it over yonder,' he added, pointing northward to a bank of ink clouds ; 'but it's singular how slowly these circular storms travel. It won't catch us up before nightfall, by which time we shall be safe and snug under the lee of the land, with our anchor down, I hope. Danger ? Oh, bless your heart, no !—not for *us*, else I shouldn't have told you. There'll be danger ashore—plenty of it, and I don't say there wouldn't be any out at sea ; but in the anchorage we're bound for we shall get nothing worse than a deluge which will cool the air for us.'

Lightly as Captain Mills treated the outlook, it is probable that he did not wholly relish it, and both he and the pilot must have been alive to the importance of reaching the anchorage of which he spoke as soon as possible. Had Margery been less ignorant

about such matters, she might have noticed that the *Carpentaria* was being taken down the straits at a rate of speed considerably higher than is customary in that tortuous channel; but, having been told that there was no danger, she anticipated none, and was content to chat with the captain and admire the beauties of the narrow, wooded Albany Pass until by degrees equanimity returned to her.

By tea-time she was inclined to think that Tom had perhaps suffered enough, so, with the intention of scolding and forgiving him, she descended to the promenade deck, where she soon found him, leaning over the side and looking very glum indeed.

'I didn't know what had become of you,' he said. 'Can you spare me a few minutes? I want to say something to you which may as well be said now.'

It was easy to guess what was coming, and her heart grew hard. Mrs. Harrison, of course, had been telling tales. Well, if he chose to believe Mrs. Harrison, let him! He should soon find out that one who had been true to him through years of trial and temptation was not going to be put upon her defence against the calumnies of a vulgar old busybody.

It did not, in truth, take poor Tom very long to find that out. His indictment—which he did not even mean to be an indictment—was worded with all the consideration and restraint that a man who was feeling sore all over could compass; but he admitted having been told of her flirtation with De Vaux, and had to add that the evidence of his own senses had borne out what he had heard.

'Don't you think,' he wound up by asking, 'that you owe me some explanation?'

'I should think,' returned Margery, 'that you owed me one, if anything could explain or excuse such accusations as you have just made. I certainly shall not trouble myself to contradict your informant, nor what you are pleased to call the evidence of your own senses either. Since the fact of my being where I am doesn't convince you that I have never thought of breaking my word, nothing will.'

Tom shook his head and sighed. 'Ah, that's just it! You are still willing to marry me, because you promised; but have I any business to hold you to your promise?'

He paused for a moment; but as she stared at him frigidly, without replying, he went on: 'I don't think, you know, that people can fairly be blamed for changing their minds after three

years. It's a long time, and of course we were both awfully young three years ago, and—and all sorts of things happen. As for me, I needn't tell you——'

'Oh, you needn't tell me anything further, thanks,' she interrupted. 'You are still willing to marry me because you promised; but you doubt whether I have any business to hold you to your promise. Your politeness and delicacy make you put it the other way about; but that is what you really mean. Well, it is quite true that all sorts of things happen in the course of three years, and I agree that we can't either of us be exactly what we were when we were three years younger, so the simplest plan is for us to let one another off and say no more about it—don't you think so?'

'It's the only plan, I'm afraid,' he answered gravely.

Thus this exceedingly foolish couple parted, neither having the wit to perceive what would have been obvious to both had they been mere spectators of the brief scene which has been described, instead of actors in it. To the young man nothing seemed more evident than that Margery had fallen in love with De Vaux, a second-rate and probably unprincipled fellow, with whom she could never be happy. It was a thousand pities, but it could not be helped. The girl, on her side, had no difficulty in believing that Tom had lost his silly heart to some New South Wales beauty—oh, one could see her from two thousand miles off, that New South Wales beauty, underbred, overdressed, loud-voiced!—whom he was now free to espouse and who would doubtless lead him a dog's life. That, too, was a sad pity; but there was no help for it.

Tom presently strolled off, with his hands in his pockets, to scrutinise the menacing sky, while Margery slipped below to her cabin and, casting herself prone upon her berth, wept aloud.

III.

Nature, always kind to those who do not transgress her laws by getting out of health, took pity upon poor little sobbing Margery after a time and sent her off to sleep. Meanwhile, Captain Mills and the pilot, holding counsel together on the bridge, had to recognise that they had been trying to do what could not be done, and that the hurricane which they had hoped to outstrip must overtake them before they could reach their sheltered anchorage. Still they would be running before it across a stretch of comparatively open water, and the only thing that they did not quite like was the prospect of steaming for half an hour or more under

conditions which were certain to render landmarks invisible. In good time all was made snug and the passengers were sent below, with the assurance that they had nothing beyond a little temporary discomfort to fear. As a matter of fact, they were not much frightened, although they might well have been, for a hurricane in those latitudes is no joke.

Immediately after sunset it burst upon the *Carpentaria* with a shriek as of a thousand storm-fiends let loose, and with such sheets of rain that those on deck could scarcely see three yards before them. Margery, startled out of her slumbers by the uproar, had one moment of panic at finding herself in the dark; but she remembered what the captain had foretold and supposed it would be all right. In the saloon, whither she presently made her way, and where the electric light had been turned on, a number of ladies were gathered together. They were clutching the tables and chairs, for the vessel had begun to roll heavily, notwithstanding the protection of the Barrier Reef, and Mr. De Vaux, who stood in the gangway comforting them with brave words, had some ado to keep his footing.

'Not the smallest cause for alarm,' he was saying, and he had to shout to make himself heard above the sustained scream of the blast; 'in about twenty minutes we shall be under the land, with a couple of anchors down, and then nothing can hurt us.'

Nevertheless, he looked rather pale, and the smile upon his lips threatened to degenerate into a nervous grin. Margery was drawing nearer to him with the intention of asking him confidentially to tell her the truth, when something occurred which suddenly brought her down upon her hands and knees. With a grinding shock the ship quivered from stem to stern; for a few seconds the screw raced furiously, then stopped, and all the lights went out.

Exactly what happened next Margery was never afterwards able to remember. A confused recollection of darkness, of flying footsteps, of hoarse shouts and shrill screams, was all that came back to her of that wild, chaotic quarter of an hour during which the *Carpentaria*, with bows hard and fast upon a reef and stern lifted by each successive wave, was in momentary peril of breaking up. She could not recall how it came about that she was crouching on the slippery deck in a deluge of rain and in a wind which threw her down every time that she attempted to raise herself, nor did she know who had enveloped her in a sailor's tarpaulin coat. But it was De Vaux who lifted her bodily into a boat which was immediately lowered into the water.

That lowering of the first boat was a more ticklish and hazardous enterprise than its occupants realised ; but it was accomplished, and subsequent danger of swamping was not quite so great as it seemed to their terrified imaginations in the welter of spray which swept over and past them. Margery, for one, expected every minute to be her last, and was conscious of some dull surprise at herself for caring so little. It seemed to her, somehow, as desirable as it was inevitable that she should soon be put out of her shivering misery.

After a time, which might have been long or short—its duration left no imprint upon her memory—she was quite abruptly put out of all danger from winds or waves. The boat had been run ashore beneath sheltering heights, which were dimly discernible ; De Vaux was half carrying, half guiding her up a sandy, shelving beach, and soon she was seated, with a number of other drenched, huddled-up women, beneath such protection from the rain as a clump of palms afforded. Here, although the tempest was raging overhead as violently as ever, there was no wind at all, and here at last speech and hearing were once more possible.

Margery made no immediate use of the former faculty, but the latter informed her that her forlorn companions were not returning thanks for the preservation of their lives. However invaluable life may appear so long as it is in jeopardy, the blessing of being still in existence when one is soaked to the skin and has lost all one's personal possessions, not to speak of one's nearest relatives, may well be regarded as a doubtful one, and it was only natural that these unfortunate ladies should lift up their voices in lamentation for their husbands, sons, and brothers. Why are women and children always the first to be removed from a sinking ship ? It is customary that they should be, but the custom is not a very considerate one, Margery thought. Alas, why was one male passenger, and only one, included among the rescued ? In fretful accents she put this rather unkind question to him while he was wrapping a rug round her knees and trying to make her as comfortable as circumstances would permit.

'Don't you understand,' he murmured reproachfully, 'that I couldn't bear to leave you all by yourself ?' And then, in a louder voice, 'But I must leave you now. We must fight our way back to the ship, if we can, upon the chance of picking up other survivors.'

That was another thing ; that made him the brave man and the gentleman that Margery had always believed him to be.

'Oh, go, then!—go at once!' she exclaimed. And, as he

lingered for a moment, inquiring absurdly whether there was nothing more that he could do for her: 'Of course not,' she returned with some impatience. 'Yes—stay—there is one thing that you can do, Mr. De Vaux. Try to save Tom—Mr. Bedingfield. We—we are not engaged any more,' she added, 'still, I don't want him to be drowned.'

De Vaux nodded and disappeared into the darkness. As soon as he had gone, Margery struggled to her feet and, dragging her rug behind her, made for a cluster of palms some little distance away from that beneath which her fellow-sufferers were congregated. That she should continue to hold aloof from them, even in the moment of shipwreck, might have struck them as a trifle comic if they had not been too much occupied with their own woes to notice her; but in truth she only wished to be alone in order that she might weep unrestrainedly. For she did not believe that she would ever see Tom again; and it is allowable to deplore the death of a very old friend even if you are no longer engaged to be married to him.

She had not been seated many minutes, with her elbows on her knees and her face hidden in her hands, when the sound of approaching footsteps caused her to look up. It was De Vaux, back already and maladroitly apologetic.

'I'm awfully sorry,' he said, 'but when I got down to the beach where we left the boat, I found that they had shoved off without waiting for me.'

Margery divined instantly that he had not wished them to wait for him. If he had really desired to brave the dangers of the sea once more he would have cursed the boat's crew instead of excusing himself to her. But all she said was:

'I suppose they felt that there was no time to be lost. Do you think they will be able to get back to the ship?'

'Well,' answered De Vaux doubtfully, 'they *may*. It isn't blowing as hard as it was, and the rain has almost stopped. But I am very much afraid that the *Carpentaria* must have foundered by now.'

'I hope not, for your sake,' observed Margery vindictively. 'It won't be very pleasant for you, will it, to be the sole survivor of the men on board?'

She scarcely listened to his rejoinder, which was lengthy and impassioned. He was protesting, she gathered, that his personal courage had never been called in question, but that his one wish, his one determination, had been to save her life. Having accom-

plished that, he could regret nothing and repent of nothing—and so forth, and so forth. What he said was of little enough importance to her, who, while he seated himself by her side and went on talking, thought her own exceeding bitter thoughts. But when he advanced from words to acts, when his arm stole round her waist and his lips audaciously touched her cheek, she sprang up in a sudden fury.

‘How dare you!’ she cried. ‘I suppose you think it is safe to insult me now that Tom is dead; but you are wrong. If you don’t go away and leave me this instant I will call to those women to come and protect me from you!’

It really seemed as if Mr. De Vaux were scarcely the bravest of the brave, for this not very alarming threat produced the desired effect upon him.

‘Don’t do that—don’t do that!’ he hastily begged. ‘I can’t quite understand why you should be so angry, considering that you are now released from a man whom I am sure that you cannot have loved; still, if my presence is disagreeable to you I won’t thrust it upon you.’

He then, with such dignity as he could muster, joined the ladies, and it may be conjectured that his lame story of failure to catch the departing boat met with no very respectful reception from them. Margery dismissed him from her mind—had also at last to dismiss from her mind the wild hope of seeing a fresh boat-load of passengers disembark. She would have exchanged—or at least she thought she would—all the years of life that might lie before her for five short minutes in which to tell Tom that she had never been false to him in her heart, and to hear from him that the New South Wales charmer was a figment of her fancy. The dragging night hours passed on; the wind lessened and lessened until it ceased altogether; the clouds drifted away southwards and stars became visible overhead. One by one the worn-out women and children dropped off to sleep; only Margery, with her hands clasped round her knees, remained open-eyed, motionless, disconsolate. It seemed only too certain that all who had not made their escape from the doomed *Carpentaria* in that first boat must have perished.

But joy came in the morning. Hardly had the sun risen resplendent upon that parched and desolate land when there arose a cheery shout from the shore below which woke all the sleepers, and was followed by the appearance of half-a-dozen men, who climbed the slope, calling out, as they drew nearer, that all was well and that not a single life had been lost. The embraces and

tears and laughter which ensued may be imagined. Margery, who, on recognising Tom Bedingfield among the new-comers, had rushed impetuously forward, checked herself after having advanced a few yards. She was intensely, unspeakably thankful; but—but the circumstance of their both being still alive made a difference. She thought she had better wait and see what he would do.

What he did was to take off his cap to her and say, with much politeness: 'I'm afraid you must have had an awful time of it, Miss Kaye. We should have come off to fetch you as soon as the storm was over, but the captain wouldn't let another boat leave before daylight with such a sea still running. We heard, of course, where you were, and he said you would be all right.'

'Yes, we have been all right, thank you,' answered Margery faintly. 'The ship is still afloat, then?'

'Oh, no, she isn't afloat, poor old ship, and I doubt very much whether she ever will be again; but we had a bit of luck after you left in being hoisted up by the sea and left high and dry on the reef. Everything will be saved, I believe; you'll be able to get all your boxes and things shifted on board the *Kumara*, which has brought up close to us and offers to take most of the passengers on to Sydney. We were told to look sharp, though, as she's a lot behind her time already.'

Poignant as Margery's anguish had been throughout the night, she was not sure that this anticlimax was not harder to bear. Tom, though pleasant and friendly (how much she would have preferred him to be cross!), showed no special solicitude about her, and she scarcely spoke to him on the way back to the reef where the *Carpentaria* lay, with a heavy list to starboard, and her twisted, broken stem showing above the water-line. Mr. De Vaux, she noticed, said something to him—something self-exculpatory which had better have been left unsaid and which was met with the chilling, scathing silence that it deserved. Not that that, or anything else, mattered now!

IV.

About an hour later Margery found herself, with all her belongings, safely on board the steamship *Kumara*, which was already under way. Somebody or other, it appeared, had been kind enough to make arrangements on her behalf, and she had only had to obey the instructions of the *Carpentaria's* officers. The ship being so crowded, it was impossible, she had been apologetically told, to give her the sole use of the cabin in which she was seated; but the

lady with whom she would have to share it was going no farther than Brisbane.

'I am going to land there myself,' was Margery's reply.

It was the only thing to do. She could not proceed to Sydney and explain that her engagement had been broken off; the only course open to her was to disembark at the nearest port, telegraph to her uncle, and return to Shanghai as soon as might be. It added only a little to her vexation and dejection to discover that the berth above hers had been allotted to Mrs. Harrison. That cheerful old lady looked in, after a time, and said:

'You are bound for Brisbane, I hear, Miss Kaye. Where do you think of putting up there?'

'At an hotel, I suppose,' replied Margery wearily. She added, 'I am going back to Shanghai as soon as possible'; for it seemed best to forestall the questions which were sure to be asked and which she would be obliged to answer.

But Mrs. Harrison mercifully refrained from interrogation, and merely remarked: 'H'm!—that will mean waiting ten days at Brisbane, and I doubt whether the hotels there are particularly comfortable. Better come to Government House with me. The Governor of Queensland is a nephew of mine, and I shall be staying a week or two with him and his wife. We'll take care of you until your steamer arrives.'

So the obnoxious Mrs. Harrison belonged, after all, to the class described by Mr. De Vaux as 'people whom one knows.' This was rather humbling to a young woman whose powers of discrimination had been baffled by a dowdy exterior; but worse was to come. For when Margery endeavoured to combine politeness and gratitude with a necessary refusal of hospitality upon which she had no sort of claim, Mrs. Harrison interrupted her with:

'Oh, don't bother about that; they'll be very glad to see you. I know some of your connections in England, and so do they, most likely. Not that it would make any odds if they didn't; for one of the first things an Australian Governor learns is that he had better not set up to be exclusive. There's that man De Vaux, for instance, who showed so little taste for a watery grave last night. He was a guest at Government House in Sydney last winter when I was staying there, and I met him again afterwards at Melbourne. It's true that, as a celebrated public singer, he enjoys certain privileges everywhere, and one might have met him at Buckingham Palace. Still, that doesn't quite make him a gentleman, does it?'

'A public singer!' echoed Margery.

'Yes; didn't you know? His real name is Vokes, I believe, if that signifies, and he has a wife whom he is said to treat rather badly. But perhaps that doesn't signify much either.'

It really did signify a little to the discomfited Margery, who, however, hastened to say:

'Not in the least to me. I quite agree with you that he isn't a gentleman.'

Mrs. Harrison laughed. 'It's only fair,' she observed, 'to admit that he is no bad imitation of one—so long as he isn't tried too highly by perils on the deep. Now won't you come out of this stifling cabin and get some air?'

'Is—Mr. De Vaux on board?' asked Margery.

She was conscious of betraying herself by the question, but she was also conscious that there was not much left to betray, and was a good deal relieved when the old lady replied:

'No, he isn't. This ship could only accommodate a few of us, and another steamer is expected to pass down the straits shortly. Those who remained on board the *Carpentaria* are as safe as they would be on dry land, you know.'

Did she mean that Tom Bedingfield was safe? It might be taken for granted that he had better taste than to be on board the *Kumara*. But Margery, who lacked courage to make further inquiries, only said: 'I should like to go up on deck as soon as I have washed and changed my dress.'

Mrs. Harrison nodded. 'That's a hint to me to take myself off,' she good-humouredly remarked. 'All right; I shall expect to see you before long, then.'

She herself went up on deck forthwith and, making for a young man who was rather moodily contemplating the arid coast-line, tapped him on the shoulder.

'Now, Mr. Tom,' said she, 'I want you to help me out of a difficulty, please. I have just been inviting Miss Kaye to stay with my nephew and niece at Brisbane, where she proposes to disembark.'

'How awfully good of you!' exclaimed Tom gratefully.

'Yes; but, between you and me I am not quite as eager for her company as I daresay some other people may be. Her intention is to wait at Brisbane for the next Shanghai boat, which implies a ten days' visit. Ten days of vain efforts to console the inconsolable—just picture it in this heat!'

'I don't think you will find her at all inconsolable,' Tom declared.

'My dear boy, don't be ridiculous ; she's just as inconsolable as you are. Of course she has behaved in an idiotic way ; but then, for the matter of that, so have you. By the by, did you know that Mr. De Vaux is a married man ? She didn't until I told her ; but she seems to have discovered that he is a bounder without being told. Come, now ; she will make her appearance presently, and then, if you are the sensible fellow that I take you for, you will beg her pardon.'

'For what ?' the young man inquired, with round eyes of surprise.

'Oh, bless me, what a silly question ! For having been so irritatingly in the right, I suppose. All the same, you shouldn't have listened to tittle-tattle. Yes, now that I think of it, you had better apologise for that. Tears will follow, and the rest will be all plain sailing. I am going to have a nap in my chair now. Perhaps you will kindly wake me up and let me know as soon as everything is comfortably arranged.'

Tom was far from sharing her confidence in the conclusion of a comfortable arrangement, and by no means sure that he had acted wisely in allowing himself, at her earnest entreaty, to be transhipped to the *Kumara* ; yet, at the expiration of a couple of hours (it was rather a long time, but there had been a good deal to say), Mrs. Harrison woke to find two young persons, with radiant, slightly embarrassed faces, standing over her.

'Ah !' said she, drawing a long breath, without waiting for them to speak, 'I thought as much. Well, that's a good job !'

'We both made a great mistake yesterday,' Margery began shyly.

'No doubt you did, my dear,' returned the old lady, 'and I'm glad it's a thing of yesterday ; but I should like just to point out to you that it has taken nothing short of a hurricane and a shipwreck to convince you of your mistake. You might bear that in mind, in case of any future misunderstandings ; because, although you probably think that the whole thing was providential, it bears rather hard upon the skipper and the pilot and the owners and the underwriters. You can't expect Providence to go on playing the deuce with other people in that wholesale style for your convenience. They tell me that that reef was uncharted, and I'm sure I hope, for everybody's sake, that it was ; but the important thing, after all—so I've always understood—is not to be wrecked. Excuses are well enough ; but it's better not to require them.'

'Tom required none,' Margery magnanimously declared.

'Oh, but I did!' the young man protested. 'I was an utter fool to imagine what I did.'

'Well, I think you were,' Mrs. Harrison agreed. 'At the same time, I shouldn't advise Miss Kaye to try any more tricks of that kind with your imagination. They are poor fun when they fail, and poorer still when they come off. Sorry I can't look forward to showing you the sights of Brisbane, my dear; but I presume you have abandoned your intention of landing there now.'

W. E. NORRIS.

A Road in Orcady.

II.

SOME time ago I wrote of this road,¹ of the furred and feathered folk that haunt it, of the flowers and weeds that make its margins gay. I had then no space left in which to write of the poor human things who made it, and who fancy, most of them, that it belongs to them and to them alone.

Now, if the patience of the Editor fail not, I would redeem my promise, and speak for a little of the men and women, the boys and maidens, whose business or pleasure leads them day by day, through dust or mud, along that buff ribbon winding through the brown moorlands and the green fields of Orcady.

This is not the way by which their fathers went, or, if their fathers, certainly not their fathers' fathers. Fifty years since there were no wheeled vehicles in the isles, save only the rough, springless country carts. Only a little time before, and even carts were not known in Orcady. The hardy Norseman's road was on the sea, and his little tillage lay around the sea-coast. What inland traffic he had was done on pony-back, and when goods had to be carried inland, or peats out of the moors and mosses, the same ponies bore them, if indeed they were not borne by the men themselves, or by their wives, 'their sisters, their cousins, and their aunts.' There is a road, an ancient way, in one of our islands on which, to this day, the women of a certain secluded valley do most of the burden-bearing, but it is not the road of which I would write: it has become too much frequented by those whose trade is politics to make it a safe or pleasant path for the non-political wayfarer.

For the rough carts of the mid-nineteenth century, ways rough as themselves sufficed. The simple dweller in Orcady made his track over hill and dale, thinking not at all of gradients, but aiming only at the shortest path to his journey's end.

Then arose a generation of men who looked forward and saw

¹ *Longman's Magazine*, July 1898.

that a new day was dawning for the isles. They bestirred themselves, these new men; they obtained Acts of Parliament, they borrowed money, they imported engineers and skilled road-makers, and soon a network of new roads began to enmesh the islands, a network which continues to spread even unto this day.

With the roads multiplied the 'machines' and 'gigs,' words which in Orcady may be applied to any vehicle on springs, from the rare carriage-and-pair to the spring-carts of the tinker and the fish-hawker.

Fifty years since the boys of the 'Grammar School' in our little capital were wont to claim—and obtain—holiday to see the laird of T. drive into 'town' in his carriage. To-day even the crofter drives his 'gig,' and a motor-car attracts less attention than the one carriage did half a century ago.

But if I am to write of the people, the wayfarers, I must not longer delay. And first, since everyone reads to-day, even in our hyperborean isles, let me say at once, this road is my road and this people my people; a road which is a type, a blend of many roads, and people who are also types, blended of many of the folk I love.

Who is first astir upon our road at dawn? I speak not of night-birds, of the poacher with his clever mongrel, or of Romeo, hasting from the parting which is 'such sweet sorrow,' but of the early-comers, fresh from dewy sleep and taking the long road in the sweetness of the morning.

Surely first on the road is the rural postman. Five or six o'clock of every morning sees his 'gig' take the day. Behind him are piled the long wicker crates and stout canvas bags which carry in their womb all manner of strange messages for the country folk of our islands. The chances are he has a gun hidden somewhere among his packages, or a lurcher loping between his wheels. He knows the way of the birds at dawn, and where a hare or rabbit may be picked up quietly by that swift and silent follower of his. Winter and summer he fails not, but daily carries through the sleeping land his burden of news from the great world.

Fifty years since one man carried the mails for the whole islands on his back. To-day it takes many men and many ponies to bear them.

While the mails were still carried by sailing boats across the Pentland Firth, it one day happened that the man who carried them from their landing-place to the town of Kirkwall was aweary. He asked the postmaster at his starting-point to enter the hour of

leaving in his time-bill a good deal later than the actual hour, so that he might be able to take his time and rest by the way. The postmaster, willing to oblige a friend, did so. This was at a time when roads and 'gigs' had come into existence, but the postmaster had evidently not realised their possibilities. The carrier was overtaken by a gig-man, who drove him to Kirkwall. Then a strange thing happened. At the central post office the carrier arrived with the mails a considerable time before—according to his time-sheet—he had left the village seven miles away. I believe that the obliging postmaster and the carrier who outstripped Time himself suffered nothing more serious than a reprimand.

After the postman come the farm labourers, with their horses, on their way to begin the work of another day; to plough in the cold autumn and winter mornings, to sow and harrow, or to reap and carry home the harvest according to the season.

As the morning draws on to full day, come little companies of cattle and sheep with their drivers, making their way to market, tryst or sale-ring, or to the steamers which are to carry them to 'the South.'

To the islesman 'the Sooth' means all of Britain from Caithness to Cornwall, and strangely vague are the ideas of that vast unknown which some of the untravelled folk hold.

'That Sooth's a vile hol' (hole), said one old woman when a friend had gone from the isles. To her it was a dark cave of unreturning footsteps, unrealised and chaotic.

I remember asking a countryman where such a one had gone.

'Oh, he's in the Sooth, somewhere Lunnon-Aberdeen way,' said his reply. It was the same man who spoke of the size of London:

'They tell me hid's a terrible big place, sir. They say ye'll see as mony folk there every day as ye'll see in Kirkwall on the market-day.'

But it must not be thought that all the native wayfarers upon my road are as vague in their ideas of 'the Sooth' as this man.

I doubt whether there is any country district in the Kingdom where you shall meet so many travelled folk as here.

In the Orcadian there is still much of the old roving blood of his Viking forefathers. The men who, in their 'longships,' sailed forth light-heartedly from their windy islands, bound for Jerusalem, and reached that sacred city, having, after many strange adventures, moored their ships at Acre; the men who rode across Europe from Constantinople to Norway and thence took ship again to their islands; the men who harried all the western coasts of Britain,

who fought at Dublin and wintered in Man—these men could not have begotten a folk content to sit round their peat fires and lament the vanished glories of their race. And they are born within sound of the sea, bred among boats and ships. It could not be but that many of the boys should, year after year, go down to the sea in ships and see wonders in the great waters; should, year by year, go forth to the lands beyond sea to gather a spoil for themselves as did their fathers before them.

But wherever he goes the Orcadian carries with him an inextinguishable love for his island home, and a more or less definite purpose of returning to end his days on his native soil.

I remember meeting a man, a crofter fisherman, whom I had not seen for some six months. I asked him if he had been much 'at the sea' since I had seen him last. 'Yes,' he replied, 'I've been to New Zealand and back.'

A week later I met another man, whom I knew as a small farmer and boatman only, and asked how an injured leg progressed.

'Oh, it's better, sir,' he said, 'but it's never been strong since I burnt it once in Calcutta.'

Another old farmer was telling me of his children in America. One of them 'gets his pound a day and walks about wi' his hands in his pockets.'

I asked him if he had never thought of going to see them.

'Yes, I took a look out to America wan time to see Jeanie, but the living was too high for me. I could na do wi'oot me parritch and kirn-milk' (butter-milk).

So, as you go along the road, of the elderly men you meet one may have never been farther than the next island, the next has likely been in Davies Straits, at the whale fishing, or in 'the Nor'-West,' in the service of the Hudson Bay Company. The younger men have more probably been in 'the States,' or 'lumbering' in Canada, or in Africa, Australia, or New Zealand. But of one thing you may be sure, each one of them has sons or brothers, uncles or cousins in some far land.

The islesmen, too, are sailors on all seas, and the isles are full of retired shipmasters, captains all by courtesy, who speak familiarly of all the ports and harbours of the world.

Of those who use the road the greater number belong to the crofting class. But let it be understood that the crofter in our islands is a very different person from the man who bears that name in the Hebrides. Our crofter is, as a rule, a comfortable man, one who pays his rent, drives his gig, and lays by a little money in the

bank for a rainy day. He is provident and cautious, and, above all things, guards the secret of his savings.

I am privileged to quote from a letter, written nearly fifty years since, by one who had long opportunity of studying the character of the islanders, and that not as one of themselves. His description of them cannot be bettered by me, and I give his own words :

‘The descendants of the fierce Norwegian Vikings, who filled the world with alarms from Iceland to Sicily, are the most peaceable, patient, and long-enduring of men. Not that they are tame and spiritless—the very reverse is the case. There is no bolder or better seaman, no more enterprising and persevering colonist, than the Orkneyman ; and if he does not go out of his way to court danger, he is certainly not daunted if danger comes to him. But he is not in the very least degree impetuous, impulsive, or ardent, like his fierce Berserker ancestors.

‘The change may be easily accounted for. At an early period the Norse Jarls became extinct in the direct male line, and, while Orkney was yet a part of the dominions of the Danish crown, they were succeeded by successive Scottish families, who naturally introduced their own kith and kin into the islands. In course of time these Scottish followers of the Earls supplanted the native Norse landholders, the Norwegian language fell into disuse, and along with the language, “tradition, legend, tune, and song,” all were lost. The foreign landlord had no community of feeling with the native tenantry, and became harsh and exacting. Every trace of the fiery rovers commemorated in saga and song faded from the recollection of their descendants, who were in time metamorphosed into the cool and cautious Orcadian of the present day.’

‘Cool and cautious’ the Orcadian is to-day, as were his fathers fifty years ago, but his manner of life, his standard of living, has slowly but surely changed, and to the road much of that change is due. About a century ago great part of the islands was ‘commonty.’ The only cultivation was on a fringe around the sea-coast, and great stretches of marsh and moorland were held in common by the landowners of each parish. Between the ‘infield,’ or cultivated land, and the ‘outfield,’ or hill pasture, were raised ‘fealdykes’ or banks of turf. On the commons, ponies, cattle, sheep, pigs, and geese grazed. The people lived on the produce of their crofts and of the sea ; rent was, to a large extent, paid in kind, or, it might be, in labour, as in the kelp-making districts. In one island, I have been told, the people of each district used to feast

together through the winter. Each house had its home-brewed ale and its hill-mutton, and in house after house the neighbours would gather until ale and mutton were finished, when the next 'browst' would be ready; and thus each householder in turn played the host to the whole party.

My informant quoted an old rhyme which, he said, described the style of living of those days :

In the winter mutton and ale,
In the summer cuithes and kail.

'Cuithes,' be it understood, are the quarter-grown saithe or coal-fish, which are still in great request in the islands.

But a time came when the great kelp industry failed and the islesfolk perforce turned their energies to the tilling of the land, The commonities were divided and cultivated, the old 'runrig' system disappeared, and as roads became necessary, roads were made. After the roads came piers, taking the place of the rough jetties of the past. The old sailing-packets, which might be weeks on the voyage to or from Leith or Aberdeen, were replaced by steamers. Commodities were carried fortnightly and weekly into the islands, which came formerly, if they came at all, but once in the year, at the great Lammas Fair. Little roadside shops sprang up through the country and flourished amazingly. At last there came to the isles a canny Scot who saw a new use for the road, and there dawned upon the natives the apparition of the travelling shop-van.

You may see these vans daily upon our road; great, unwieldy, lumbering boxes on wheels, drawn by two strong horses and rambling leisurely through the quiet country. At every by-road leading to farm or croft or cottage, the country women await them with eggs, with butter, or whatever produce they may have to barter for tea, for oil, for bread, for jam, or for any of the miscellaneous load which the van carries. The vanmen, too, carry the news and gossip of the towns to the country and of the country to the towns.

Yet not wholly are these travelling shops blessed in the islands. Rumour has it that they take whatever is offered them, asking no questions.

The farmer growls over the eggs and butter that should be but are not; the sportsman suspects his vanishing game of finding a temporary home in the vans. Indeed, when, not many years since, a vanman was charged before the sheriff with having grouse

in his possession, it was pleaded for him that it is 'the custom of the country.' Even such unlikely commodities as living swans have been bought and sold by van-drivers. Nor are these the only evils ascribed to the wandering merchants. I remember once driving with an old crofter who beguiled the way by lamenting the degeneracy of the islesmen of to-day. One after another he set forth the backslidings and the fallings away of his countrymen, and ever as a chorus came the words :

'It's a' the black pot that stands aside the fire.'

At last I asked him what 'pot' it was which had wrought so much evil in the land, and learned it was the teapot! Tea, he said, had taken the place of good milk and ale; tea brought with it (by van) white bread and biscuits instead of the oatmeal and 'bere bannocks' of his youth. With the bread came marmalade and cheap jam, and the vans carried away the butter which should have strengthened the bairns. These things, he held, were ruining the fortunes and the digestions of the race. It is so much easier to buy from the vans than to bake and brew—and the Orcadian loves the line of least resistance—that people will rather buy at their own doors something a little worse than they might have by taking trouble, than take that little trouble.

For, energetic and successful though he is as a colonist, energy is not the islesman's strong point at home. In a land where there are no railways the necessity for punctuality or for hurry rarely comes home to him.

Come down from the road to this quay and watch a fishing-boat come in. As she comes alongside one of the crew drops his cap overboard. Does he try to catch it? Not he, though there is a boat-hook at his hand: that would mean too quick and sudden an expenditure of force. He moors his boat and then gets slowly into a smaller boat and rows out the bay after his cap, which has drifted with wind and tide.

'Now, why did he not, by a little trouble at first, save himself so much time and trouble afterwards?' you ask. The answer, from one who knows well the mental atmosphere of Orcady, expresses what you may see every day put into action (or inaction) on our road :

'Oh, day and night's as long as ever; there's no hurry here.'

As I have said, there are no railways, but we are not devoid of public carriers. Are there not the 'coaches,' long, clumsy, home-made breaks or drags, drawn by a pair of horses and often furnished

with a rude box-like top or cover, to be fitted on in winter? With them there is certainly no hurry. The drivers are ever on the outlook, here and there picking up or dropping passengers, but more frequently taking parcels, or letters to be posted, or instructions to buy something, or to fetch something already bought. (I have travelled in the 'coach' with a sheep, and with a pigling in a sack.) Then the driver will stop for five minutes to chat and gossip. Of course these coaches run upon our road, but in the smaller islands they are unknown, and wind and tide have to be waited on. Therefore the farmer prefers the 'Mainland,' as our principal island is called, where, as I once heard in a 'coach,' 'ye can rin when ye're ready.'

There is not much comfort in these 'coaches,' but, against that, the cost is not great. Eighteen miles you may drive for one shilling, and, with luck, have much entertainment by the way. Two ladies travelling thus upon a day spoke to each other in French. At once an ancient crofter addressed them in that tongue. They 'ound he had learned it in Canada in his youth. He was one of those who return, but every year the flower of our youth go out over-seas, and but few of them come back. Once in a wider world, their energies awake, and, aided by their native caution, seldom fail to ensure success.

They are cautious, even from the cradle.

I met a little girl upon the road, an unusually pretty child.

I asked her name.

'Williamina.'

'What more?'

'I dinna ken ony mair.'

'What's your father's name?'

'I ken no.'

'Do you ken your mother's name, then?'

'I never speired (asked) her.'

'Can you tell me how old you are?'

'I'm no ould ava, I'm young.'

After that I gave her up. Two years afterwards I met her again. She was just about to leave with her father and his whole family for America.

'How will you like living in America, Williamina?' I asked her. It was one of the foolish questions one puts to a child, and I was well answered.

'I dinna ken till I get there,' was her reply, and I questioned that young lady no more.

The islesman is not devoid of a humour of his own, though many of his most humorous sayings are not so of intention.

It was upon the road, in the dusk of a market night, that I overheard the following scrap of conversation between a lad and a lass.

‘Is that thee, Mary Anne?’

‘Na, it’s Bella Jean.’

‘Oh, ay, I thought it was’na thee.’

But to tell of all the people who use our road would need a volume, and so I must leave unsaid all I could say of the commercial ‘gents’ and the cattle-dealers, of the man with the gun and the man with the rod, of the rare shepherd and the frequent fisherman, of the tourist and the naturalist, of the egg-stealer and the photographer, of the cyclist and the motorist, and all the others who use the road in their season.

There are things, too, which every passer-by does not hear—the superstitions and beliefs of the islesfolk, their tales and traditions. The people of the road, if you can win their confidence, will show you here the way by which, not so very long ago, witches were led to the stake and sheep-thieves to the gallows; there the island where the rival earls fought through a summer night some eight centuries since; or, again, the valley where the islesmen met, routed, and slew the invading men of Caithness. Or they may point out to you the green mound where a belated fisherman found the fairies dancing, and lingered with them till the morning through a short night which to those without the enchanted mound had counted as a year. They may even tell you of superstitions which still live, superstitions which they affect to scorn, but in which you will discover, after a little, they still have an unconfessed belief.

With the stories I have heard upon the road of witches and fairies, of giants and Finmen, of ghosts and dreams, signs, omens, and warnings, I could fill many pages and doubtless weary many readers.

Then I have to leave untold all that is revealed by the carts which pass to and fro upon our road. Show the wandering islesman in some distant land this cart, loaded with brown peat, and straightway he will remember the days of the peat-cutting on the hills, when light and shadow race with the flying clouds over the brown heather, when the grouse-cock crows on the brae and the whaups call across the moorlands; he will remember the making of the malt and the brewing of the ale for the peat-cutting; the carting

home of the dried peat and the building of the stack in the long days of the island summer ; the smell of the peat smoke is in his nostrils, and he can hear again the tales of his youth around the winter fires.

Or tell him of this other cart, laden with splintered wreck-wood, and once more he will hear the thunder of the surf and the hissing pipe of the gale, when the white spume flashes up through the blackness of night like ghostly hands that clutch at the crags, when hapless ships crash on the hidden reef and the sea has her will of the men who would be her masters. For the thoughts of every islesman must come back, as his roads do, to the sea, and if he come at last, as every true son of Orcady would fain come,

Among familiar names to rest,
And in the places of his youth,

then will he be borne by the people of his own islands along the old road, to be laid in his long home close by the margin of the sea and within sound of her waves. For the sea was the road of his fathers, beside her beaches they made their kirkyards, and there, within hearing of her music, which is interwoven with our lives, would all we islesfolk find our quiet resting graves.

White is the long road and firm beneath our feet,
The summer skies are over us, the summer air is sweet ;
Through misty morn and shining noon, until the evening grey,
We follow still the long road—far and far away.

The long road, the white road, it calls us evermore—
High among the purple hills, low along the shore—
Till at last it bring us to the place where we would be,
Where brown sails are shining beside the silent quay.

Sails that shall spread for us, carry us afar
Out across the quiet sea, steering by the star ;
The mother sea shall hold us like children to her breast—
H old us, and fold us, and hush us to our rest.

DUNCAN J. ROBERTSON,

Fogeydom.

MY little child by gossipred sat by my side and softly played ;
And ever and anon she spake, half to herself and half to me,
And laughed in pretty childly glee, and now and then would
gently take

My left hand 'twixt her two small hands, and smile as one that
understands.

And when the game she played was o'er, with her sweet eyes did
she implore

My work might stop 'just for a wee,' to let her chatter on my
knee.

'I want to tell you how I've made a grand new game to-day,'
she said ;

'It's all about a place I know, but where I never mean to go.

The people there are stiff and glum, it's called the Land of
Fogeydom.'

'My little sweetheart, do you mean the land where I some while
have been ;

The land where people walk more slow, and see less true than
long ago,

And speak less clear and hear less well ?' And here I paused a
little spell,

With just a sort of vague intent of speech, but on my lady
went :

'No, no, dear Sib ; you must not say one word, but hear about
my play.

The people of that land, you see, are different from you and me.'

(Then to my heart dear gladness came, I being but a foolish
dame.)

'They always think they ought to joke whene'er they talk to
little folk.

They do not love us really—no, Sib ; I cannot tell you why !

All I can tell you is, I know it's really, really, truly so.

They think that everything is wrong that differs from the things they knew

In days when they were young and strong; yes, wrong and strange and vulgar too.

They think that little girls and boys are horrid things for making noise;

They think for them it's only fit with hands before them still to sit, And then make bows and curtseys low and up to bed in silence go. They think that everything should be just as they like it, Sib, you see;

And yet they cannot like as much as we that smell and taste and touch

So quickly; we that never will, because we can't, sit stiff and still.

And when the boys are home from school, they'd like to have the strictest rule,

They always must be in in time! You see it spoils the very prime Of all our jollity and fun if things must *regular* be done.'

And here the summons came for bed. 'Good-night,' my little godchild said,

'Good-night; to-morrow, Sib, I'll come and tell you more of Fogeydom.'

And when my little lady went, with pretty eyes of sweet content, Because I asked God's blessing shed for evermore upon her head, I sat and thought a while on this, and knew it had not come amiss

To warn me of that narrow ground within a generation's bound.

(Oh, it may be that a child's jest may send one nearer to God's breast.)

Then at the dear Lord's feet I prayed, 'Lord, let us be deliverèd Not only from our sin's distress, but from all petty narrowness: Not only from dead sympathies, unsmiling lips, unweeping eyes, But from the tyranny that says, "our ways alone must be your ways."

Give us Thy Spirit of liberty: from self and selfness set us free.'

Love, keep us, guide us, lest we come to the grey garths of Fogeydom.

EMILY HICKEY.

The Midnight Axe.

THE day was sweltering hot, probably the hottest of a more than ordinarily torrid Australian summer. The north wind, raging across the burnt-up, dusty plains, smote one's face like a blast from the mouth of a furnace seven times heated, and if in an incautious moment one's bare hand touched a part of the saddle exposed to the fierce sun, the sensation was as if red-hot iron had seared the skin. Wherever shade of a sort could be found, the carrion crows sat silent, open-mouthed, and gasping, with wings held out from their sides, for the time too exhausted to attack the victims of the drought—the bullocks, which lay dead here and there beside what once had been water-holes. In one place there were two of these poor brutes, more wretched in their end than those already dead, which still half stood, half lay, waiting for the release of merciful death. For pitiless days they had been engulfed to the brisket in glue-like mud, now rapidly glazing and cracking, which had tempted them to their end because yet in places it *smelt* of water.

Once, as I approached a clump of timber, a cow, standing sentry over her dead calf, herself a pitiable skeleton, with hoarse bellow charged viciously at me. But weakness stopped her before she had come many yards, and on powerless, trembling legs she stood, mad, impotent rage glaring out of her eyes. *La vache enragée* of the French proverb!

I had ridden since long before sunrise, hoping by a little after midday to strike the river, there to camp for the night, then to make a short day to the station of my nearest neighbour down stream, and so by easy stages once more to reach civilisation, with its luxuries of baths, and cool drinks, and fresh vegetables.

But my horse—poor beast, the last the cruel drought had left on my station, the only one that had not fallen with a bullet through its head, speedy and merciful substitute for a lingering death by hunger and thirst—my horse had been unequal to the

journey, and by the time that the river timber began to show up, a dark mass in the bilious yellow of the dust-laden atmosphere, it was already late afternoon.

For the last two hours I had walked alongside the drooping head of the jaded animal, casting the while many a longing look on the canvas water-bag that hung, long empty, at the saddle, dry and hard as the crusted sweat on my horse's sides.

My head felt as if a tight cord were knotted round it, the blood throbbed and sang in my ears, and my tongue, swollen and coated as with fur, or with the dry powder from a puff-ball, knocked against the roof of my mouth like a half-burned coal. Would we *never* reach that water?

Before we came to the river flats the wind had dropped, and a red, swollen, misshapen-looking sun was dipping into a black band of cloud low down on the horizon, while more to the south the curious yellow light turned to deep umber a thick cloud-belt, along whose edges flickers of lightning played.

On through the timber we pushed for the river, my horse whinnying in his eagerness. But river worthy of even a shadow of the name there was none. Nothing remained but a thin chain of infrequent water-holes, without semblance of a stream, what water was left covered with thick green scum; in the hole where we drank lay two dead kangaroos.

But it was water—at least it was fluid—and, regardless of considerations that would have filled with loathing the dweller in cities, we drank greedily, the horse with his muzzle buried almost to the eyes.

We had struck the river at a bend where it made a wide elbow. Thus there was heavy timber for perhaps half a mile on either hand, while east and west the sombre box-trees followed the long line of watercourse to the horizon. It was not a bad place to camp, for here and there was still some picking for my horse, and I was so confident that he would not go far from the water that I did not hobble him, but merely put the horsebell round his neck, as a guide to his whereabouts in the morning.

Though the heat was still tremendous, more unbearable even, I think, now that the wind had fallen, than it had been all day, I forced myself to light a fire and make a quart-pot of tea, which, with a bit of the damper I had brought with me, formed my meagre supper.

My head on my rolled-up blanket, I lay afterwards, smoking, while thoughts gloomy enough, Heaven knows, chased each other

through my brain. Drought, and dust, and death, season after season, with inevitable overwhelming debt, are not subjects of which a man takes a cheerful view after such a day as I had passed. Ravaging mosquitoes added to the discomfort, and dejectedly I thought that for *my* soul at least I had built no 'lordly pleasure-house, wherein at ease for aye to dwell.'

As night fell, the cloud-bank in the south and south-west rose, slowly blotting out the stars, and bringing with it a blackness as of ink, relieved only by the occasional quiver of sheet lightning. The stillness grew more and more intense; the very frogs ceased their chorus. Excepting the 'ping' of a mosquito, the only sound to be heard was the infrequent 'tonk-a-tonk' of the bell round my horse's neck, which in some strange way but emphasised the silence. All Nature seemed waiting for something to happen.

Soon, from far in the south-west came a sound, that was yet hardly a sound, that might be but the blood drumming in one's ears. Gradually its volume increased, and anon it was as the endless thunder of surf breaking in giant rollers on a great reef.

Now I knew what to expect, and I removed my saddle and blanket and other small belongings to the lee side of a huge red gum-tree.

Around me there was as yet no motion of the air, the flame of a match burned straight up, without a flicker; but ever the hubbub drew nearer, and deepened its roar.

Then one or two heavy drops of warm rain, a puff of cool air that brought with it a sickly smell of earth, a blinding cloud of dust, and, with the mad yell of a thousand fiends, the storm leaped on us.

Crash upon crash of thunder split one's ears; sheets of flame seemed to sweep the ground; giant limbs were snatched from the gaunt gums and hurled far to leeward by the raging hurricane. And then hail, devastating and devilish in its fury, the stones great ragged ice-balls big as pigeons' eggs, came scourging down through the groaning, wind-tortured branches. Nothing living could withstand that while it lasted, and sadly, as I clung to the shelter of a huge trunk, I thought of the probable fate of my horse.

For a time the storm raged with fury unabated, then gradually, keeping for a while to the course of the river, it passed away to the north-east, and spent itself over the distant plains. Its track possibly had been nowhere more than a mile wide, but in that space who shall say of what devastation such a tornado is capable?

There had been no rain (alas for a drought-stricken land!), only

hail, which lay white on the weather side of every fallen log, soon to melt and increase the general discomfort. But the sky to the south was now clear, the Cross shone brightly, and only a black cloud in the north-east and a distant moaning told where the storm was working itself out. Around me the air was cool, almost cold; the mosquitoes had ceased to trouble, and but for the renewed chorus of frogs the silence would have been again complete.

It was of little use, till daylight came, to look for my horse. I could not hear his bell, and I knew that either he lay dead, crushed under some fallen tree, or, panic driven, he had fled before the hail as far as his strength would carry him—no great distance, probably, poor beast.

Meantime there was nothing to be done, so, having with some difficulty relit my fire, I lay down, wrapped in my blanket, and smoked.

About midnight a waning moon rose, enabling one to see the wreck left by the tornado, and I think that about that time I was beginning to drop asleep, when suddenly from a distance came the ring of an axe. Sharp, and clear, and regular the strokes fell, minute after minute; then there would be a pause, and a thin yell of laughter. Who could be felling trees at this time of night, and in such a place, far from civilisation and from sawmills? And what was he laughing at? Steadily the ring of the axe went on, and now and again I fancied that I heard the rend and crash of falling timber. A strange time, surely, to set about wood-cutting!

Then I remembered the sound of the Midnight Axe that is heard among the Cingalese; indeed, I had myself once heard the noise in a jungle in Ceylon. I knew that there are various superstitions about the cause of the sounds in various parts of the world. In Mexico the Spaniards found it, in the days of Cortes; in Madagascar it is known, in the Galapagos Islands, in St. Helena, and even, some say, in Ireland. Probably, I thought, among the aborigines of Australia, too, some kindred superstition exists; but, after all, what makes the noises?

No man had ever yet discovered the cause of those sounds, except in one case, and that case peculiar. The long-tailed horn-bill in the jungles of the Malay Peninsula smites the tree-trunks with his bone helmet, blow after echoing blow, and then he laughs like a devil; you can hear him a mile away. I had heard him and seen him, and, as I remembered this, I heard him again. A shriek of hysterical laughter came through the still, chill air after a

succession of axe-strokes. The laughing seemed to punctuate the strokes: so many blows, and then the laugh, which was of an inhuman merriment. I could not expect to sleep while this was going on; moreover, to bag a long-tailed hornbill in Australia would be a thing worth doing, and recording in the *Proceedings* of the Linnæan Society of New South Wales. I happened to have a revolver, and the bird was clearly so much absorbed that he was likely to be an easy shot. So I put in fresh cartridges, and set off through the reeking scrub and melting hail in the direction of the noises. The axe, if it was an axe, was not a wood-feller's; the sound was rather that of an iron tomahawk. A stone tomahawk needs two blows to reach the ringing solid wood—the first is deadened on the bark; this axe reached the wood at once. Could a blackfellow have any reason for felling a tree at midnight, and, if he had, why should he punctuate his blows with yells of laughter?

So I mused as I stumbled through the scrub, as quietly as might be. If the cause of the noises were a bird, I did not want to frighten it; if it were a blackfellow, he might have seen my horse, and I would not disturb him till I was sure of catching him. If a black, he was a mad black, a thing rare in the tribes, unless they have got at too much whisky for too long a time, and in that condition they are very ready with their spears. Gradually I drew nearer, and now I was fairly certain that the laughter was human, and was insane. I crawled as softly as a Red Man on the warpath or a black on a *kurdaitcha*—a blood feud trail. I even took off my boots and hung them round my neck.

At last I was rewarded. Only a knoll, dense with brush, stood between me and the place whence I judged that the noises proceeded. I literally crept like a serpent, revolver in hand, till my eyes looked over the summit of the knoll. There I saw what no mortal could have guessed. In the clear, cold light of the moon a mother-naked white man was hacking at the boughs of a gigantic tree which the wind had uprooted. His naked skin in the sheen of the moonbeams stood out with unearthly effect against the black shadows of the undergrowth, and each blow from a hatchet sent a shiver as of silver through the glistening leaves of the far-stretched branches. Ever and again he paused, lifted his wild eyes to the sky and uttered his mad laughter, and then fell to work again fiercely with an iron tomahawk. I watched him carefully for five minutes, not certain that I was quite sane myself. To make sure of that, I silently repeated a few Latin lines—'rep'

that had clung to my memory since my schooldays. I knew them perfectly; I was neither mad nor dreaming. But something must be done with this naked white man. The process of stalking began afresh. I slunk down the knoll, and made a fairly wide turning movement. Luckily the scrub was thick at the fellow's back. I stole through it, and, at a moment when, his tomahawk hanging from his tired hand, he paused to laugh, I seized that hand, and, before he could resist, took the weapon.

The poor devil, with the perspiration running down his thin cheeks to his red beard, shivered, and only said: 'Billy's dead under that tree.'

'Poor Billy,' I answered soothingly. 'And who is Billy?'

'I am Billy,' he answered, 'Billy Wagstaffe. The tree fell on Billy, but he looked dead already. We must get him out. Billy was killed when the tree fell, or was dead already.'

'But who are *you*? ' I asked.

'I am Billy, Billy Wagstaffe.' Here he threw up his face, opened his mouth, and let a shriek of laughter out between his yellow, broken tusks.

The laugh stopped with an abruptness that startled me.

'Billy's dead; there goes his passing bell.'

I listened, and heard the clang of my horse's bell. He came at my whistle, from hoofs to ears plastered with mud. Evidently when fleeing from the hail he had galloped through and had fallen in the mud of a half-dry water-hole, and he must afterwards have rolled to dry himself. But a glad sight he was to me.

'We must get Billy out. You hack and I'll pull,' said Mr. Wagstaffe, whose intelligence rose to the great conception of the division of labour.

I did not feel sure that the tree when it fell had not killed a pal of his, and his terror might be the cause of his madness. So I went at the work with the tomahawk, and he did his full share in dragging off the branches as I sundered them from the tree. Rather to my relief he ceased to laugh, and at last he said, almost sanely: 'Got a notion Billy's not there.'

In fact, nobody *was* there when we had cleared the spot completely, but there was the camp and the 'swag' of my naked companion—a saddle, bridle, and hobbles, his blankets, 'billy,' and pannikin, clothes, and so forth, and other articles which indicated the prospector. The naked one examined them with some minuteness. 'Guess it's all right,' he said; '*my* swag'; and in about a minute he was clothed and in his right mind.

'The horrors?' I asked. It is a delicate question to put to a total stranger, and I tried to qualify it by adding, sympathetically: 'The jim-jams?'

For answer Mr. Wagstaffe pointed majestically to a very dirty piece of blue ribbon in the button-hole of his ragged jacket. 'Sworn off since Christmas was a year,' he said. He then looked round, wavered on his legs, and, to my entire horror, grew deadly white, toppled slowly over, and fainted.

Blue ribbon or no blue ribbon, I forced his mouth open, and poured down his throat about a glassful of whisky. This revived him, but presently he was very unwell, and after that he fell asleep. It seemed that the only thing in the world to do was to follow his example. I hobbled my horse this time, and in five minutes was in slumber too deep for dreams, though, indeed, no dream could match my waking experiences of that strange night. When I awoke the sun was shining on my face, the melted hail was sparkling like diamonds, and I instantly turned to look for my horse. He was gone, and Billy was gone; the hound had deserted me and stolen my horse. This was my first thought; but before me a fire was burning, beside me was a battered tin full of water, which was not the loathsome water of the river puddle, and on the tin, scratched freshly with a knife, were the letters—

'GONFURELP.'

'Gone for help!' Billy had got over his fit of mad terror.

It was all very well-meant, but suppose he did not return!

Here was I, dependent for my rescue on the whim of a man who probably was a lunatic, stranded without means of making my way to the nearest station, in country so dried up that to walk was a resource to be adopted only in extremity.

Wagstaffe's 'tucker bag' was almost empty; only a little flour and a very little tea were left. Would these, added to my own tiny stock, last till his return—if he did return?

However, one must eat, and from the flour I made some 'johnny-cakes' in the ashes; but though I used the tea sparingly there remained almost none to carry on with.

As the sun mounted higher in the sky the heat became again almost roasting; there was not a breath of air stirring, and the flies thronged over my face and hands and into my eyes. Of all the plagues of Egypt surely there was but one worse! When one is at work—work involving physical exertion, that is—anything is bearable; but to sit hour after hour in stifling heat, with only such

apology for shade as is provided by an Australian eucalypt, to be eaten alive the while by ravening flies—not Job himself could have endured such a lot with propriety.

But the weary day passed, and the hot, breathless purgatory of night dragged through, and ere the second day had begun to wane, from the station came my friend in a light double buggy drawn by two lean, spider-like animals that in pre-drought days had been good horses. Beside him sat Billy Wagstaffe.

As I learned later, Wagstaffe was well known to my friend. He had camped for a time near the station some months previously, and when rain had chanced to fall in quantity sufficient to confirm sanguine folk in the belief that at last the drought was breaking, he had moved on up-stream with his two horses. His intention was, as soon as heavy rain should fall, to push across a wide tract of country that was then waterless, and so to reach a spot found by him on a former prospecting trip, where he said there existed the greatest opal-field in Australia. His fortune was made! But the pitiless drought had returned, more hungry even than before for its victims, and Billy had camped where I found him, only once, some time back, visiting the station in order to obtain a supply of flour and tea. Here both his horses had died from eating some poisonous herb, and his supplies, when I came across him hacking at the tree, were exhausted. He himself, owing to a badly cut foot, could not possibly have reached the station by walking.

Now for the explanation of Mr. Wagstaffe's incoherent and unaccountable behaviour in the dawn of our acquaintance, a comradeship very profitable to me. For Billy's account of his opal-mine tempted me to accompany him to the place he knew, when the rains came at last, and, though opals are not so fashionable as they once were, he and I made what, to broken men, seemed reasonably tall 'piles' out of his discovery.

Finding Billy a good fellow, and the founder of my fortunes, I never asked him a question as to the cause of his wild proceedings on the night when I had so unusually complete a view of him. But one evening on board ship, on our homeward way, as we sat smoking on deck in the moonlight, Billy said: 'This reminds me of that night in the bush.'

'I prefer our present prospects,' I answered. I hoped that the sentiment of the scene might tempt my friend into confidences, so I said no more.

'You are not a prying, inquisitive cove,' said Billy. 'Did you think I was mad or drunk that night?'

'First one, and then the other, and then both. But you sobered down very soon, and that was what beat me.'

'I sobered, as any fellow would have done when I found I was not there, flattened out under that gum-tree. How *could* I tell whether it was him or me that had been smashed into a pancake?'

I smoked on quietly, though I almost trembled with curiosity.

'Guess he was my jolly old guardian angel,' said Billy, adding: 'Do you know the Maoris at all?'

'Not I.'

'Well, they keep blowing about guardian angels like mine, only I forget the native for them. If a Maori turns into a path in the forest in the dusk, and sees his own self lying across it, he tries back pretty quick, and takes another track. The way is dangerous, and that is how his guardian angel gives him the straight tip. I remembered that, after what happened to me.'

'Do you believe the yarn?'

'I didn't use to believe it,' said Billy. 'No white man would; but I do believe it now. If my guardian angel had not played up, I would not be here now, nor you either, perhaps.' Billy paused, then went on: 'I've never told mortal man how it was; but you know I'm not a liar?'

'You are straight, Billy; better than straight you have been to me.'

'Well, this is how it was. That evening I was so dog-tired, and the air was so like a furnace, that I lay down in my blanket, stripped, just rolled in my blanket mother-naked, and I slept through the racket. Something touched me, and I woke, wide awake. There was another cove lying beside me; *that* was a rum circumstance. His back was to me, but I saw that he was wearing my old duds. That was a liberty. I gripped to my tomahawk pretty quick. He slept like a log, never a sound of his breathing, and I turned him over, face up. The moon shone as full on him as it does on you. I saw him as I see you—as plain—and *he* was *me*. Same dirty long hair, same red beard, same scar down the left cheek—a broken bottle did *that*—same teeth, not much to blow about. Well, I was some scared, but nothing to speak of. 'You ugly beggar,' says I; and I was going to fetch him a kick to rouse him up, when, as I looked, his whole face altered, his jaw dropped, his eyes stared open, and I saw myself—dead! I didn't wait; I let a scream out of myself, and jumped clean fifteen feet,

I guess, to one side. Then down came the gum-tree—without a creak of warning, down it came. A bough scratched my shoulder as it fell, but I, the dead fellow that was me, was buried right under the trunk and the boughs. Then I guess I *was* mad, for the while. I heard somebody laughing like a lunatic—me, that must have been—and I just went for that tree with my tomahawk, hacking, hacking, to get myself out, for I was that mixed that I thought I was under the tree, or might be—how could I tell? Mixed I was, as you may remember, but you coming kind of helped to sober me, till, when I found I was not there, whatever, I expect I fainted clean away.'

'You did,' I said.

'Well, you know the rest. I was all right before you wakened, and I ciphered it out in my mind, especially when I remembered the Maori yarn. The other fellow was my jolly old guardian angel.'

'They call him the Subliminal Self now,' I said; 'but I fancy it is all the same thing.'

'That word you said is not the native for it, but I disremember what the natives do call it,' said Billy. 'Anyway, it is off my mind, and I guess I'll turn in.'

JOHN LANG.

Sir Walter Scott's Use of the Preface.

'MOST novel-readers,' Sir Walter Scott somewhere remarks, 'as my own conscience reminds me, are apt to be guilty of the sin of omission respecting that same matter of prefaces.'

These words have a two-fold interest. First, they presuppose a duty on the part of novel-readers to read prefaces. And this, in turn, seems strange to us, who do not look for prefaces to novels, and should certainly not read them, if they were written, unless in exceptional circumstances. Secondly, it is remarkable that, with this knowledge of the habits of his public, Scott should have devoted such trouble to the writing of prefaces. In the hands of Scott the preface suddenly acquired a dignity and interest which it had never before possessed, and which it has never since attained. Men like Swift, Sterne, and Fielding had introduced elegant essays into the middle of their novels which had no more bearing upon the development of the story than have many of the beautiful lyrical choruses of Euripides upon the plot of the particular drama. Scott recognised that this was false art; that people do not want irrelevant digressions, however beautiful, which interrupt the thread of the story; that all such extraneous matter must be treated quite apart from the body of the novel. And so, while Swift pours forth his violent abuse of Grub Street in the very heart of his *Tale of a Tub*, Scott, with a truer instinct for the functions of a novel, confines such attacks upon his critics to the preface.

But attacks upon, and replies to, his critics form only a small portion of the material of Scott's prefaces. Their range is quite as wide as, if not wider than, that of his actual novels. At the head of his general preface to the *Waverley Novels* Scott has placed the words: 'And must I ravel out my weaved-up follies?' Apt as these words are, perhaps the famous line of the old Latin poet, 'Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto,' would be even more apposite; for indeed there are few subjects which do not

form the 'farrago' of Scott's prefaces. In these prefaces Scott thoroughly takes us into his confidence. Now he shows himself as a critic of his own style, now as a critic of the plot of his novels; now he gives us interesting pieces of autobiography; now he lays bare his inmost hopes and fears. And in particular we find two main themes, the one the sources of his novels, the other the reasons for his remaining so long as the 'Great Unknown,' the mysterious 'Author of *Waverley*.' But although all these different subjects are woven together in the actual prefaces, it will be more convenient to treat them separately. The question of authorship is perhaps the most important, and calls for our first attention.

Why Scott should have chosen deliberately to remain anonymous is strange enough; but, having so chosen, why he should then have continually harped upon this subject in his prefaces is still more strange. The ordinary anonymous writer either gives no reason for his conduct, or briefly hints his reasons once and for all. Not so Scott. He seemed to take a real delight in making his prefaces the medium of a gigantic 'missing-word competition,' which was calculated to stimulate and whet the curiosity of the public on the production of each novel. Finally, of course, Scott was compelled to disclose his authorship, and, having done so at a public dinner in Edinburgh, as he tells us in the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, he then gave his reasons for his baffling conduct in a subsequent preface. He has several explanations to hand. The *Waverley Novels*, he argues, were a gigantic experiment, and therefore demanded anonymity. An experiment they certainly were. *Waverley*, with its combination of the real and the imaginative, justifies the assertion that Scott is the father of the historical novel, since so popular. But surely the success of the experiment would have, in most cases, made the author doubly ready to acknowledge his paternity. Scott must have felt this argument to be weak, as he has others in store. He did not want fame; he had already won a sufficient literary reputation by his poetry. True; but then he was being eclipsed by Lord Byron. His *Lord of the Isles* was, on his own showing, not much of a success. Why then did he not seize the opportunity to recover his prestige in another direction? Again he explains that by remaining anonymous he could retreat and appear at will. He wished, in fact, to play the part of Addison's *Spectator*, who knew everybody and everything, himself unknown. Further, he says that he disliked personal discussion on his works. He was afraid his friends might be too partial to him. And to crown all he gives as the real truth the

reason that 'I never expected or hoped to disguise my connection with these novels from anyone who lived on terms of intimacy with me.' But then the authorship of the *Waverley* Novels was, in reality, not doubted by anyone, at least, of those who moved in literary circles, as the following story, which Scott himself quotes, and does not wholly deny, proves. Lord Byron is quoted to have said to Captain Medwyn: 'Scott as much as owned himself the author of *Waverley* to me in Murray's shop. I was talking to him about that novel, and lamented that its author had not carried back the story nearer to the time of the Revolution. Scott, entirely off his guard, replied: "Ay, I might have done so, but——" There he stopped, and without another word left the shop.' It appears, then, that as not only his intimate friends but also all men of letters at least knew who the 'Author of *Waverley*' was, Scott must have meant to puzzle only the less well-informed general public. He was perhaps stimulated in this curious aim by the remembrance of the excitement which had greeted the publication of Ossian's Poems, the Drapier Letters, and the Letters of Junius. But probably this masquerading under various names was a kind of instinct in Scott. At any rate, it is significant that in the *Chronicles of the Canongate* he confesses that the majority of the poems quoted at the heads of his chapters are pure invention. 'Even where,' he pawkily observes, 'actual names are affixed to the supposed quotations, it would be to little purpose to seek them in the works of the authors referred to.' But there was method in his madness, if we may so term this fantastic love of masquerade. By not signing himself at first otherwise than as the 'Author of *Waverley*' Scott was able at his fancy to alter his *nom de plume*, and with his name also his style of preface. Thus we get a far greater variety in these inimitable prefaces than we otherwise should have done. He had not contemplated again writing when he had finished the *Antiquary*. *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, and the *Antiquary* were a complete trilogy which dealt with the times of Scott's father, his own youth, and the last ten years of the eighteenth century respectively. When, then, he decided to make another attempt after all (for which he finds a good parallel in the remark of Benedick, that when he said he would die a bachelor he did not think he should live to be married), he reappeared as the imaginary Jedediah Cleishbotham editing the works of the equally imaginary Peter Pattieson. The change in style is at once apparent. In Jedediah's prefaces we find that pompous, restrained style, so precise and sonorous, such as befits

that august personage. His account of Peter Pattieson, the weary usher who had been educated for Holy Kirk, as one 'who delighted in the collection of olden tales and legends, and in garnishing them with the flowers of poesy, whereof he was a vain and frivolous professor,' is but a thinly veiled description of Scott's own delight in antiquarian research. The invention of Peter Pattieson enabled Scott to give us that delightful picture of Gandercleugh, the very navel of Scotland, as he calls it, which is only rivalled by Goldsmith's *Deserted Village* as a description of a peaceful village life of Arcadian simplicity. And then having, as he thought, exhausted the mine of the *Tales of my Landlord*, he goes on to assume the character of Templeton in his *Ivanhoe* preface. Scott expressly mentions here that the character of Templeton is imaginary, being introduced to put inquirers on a false scent, because some stranger had attempted to continue the *Tales of my Landlord*. With a final mention of Scott impersonated as Croftangry in the *Chronicles of the Canon-gate*, we may leave the phenomenon of Scott's anonymous writing. It is hard to accept any of his explanations singly, unless it be that in which he suggests that he acted as he did because (with Corporal Nym) it was the humour or caprice of the time.

The second great theme of all the prefaces is the account of the sources and materials from which the novels were built up. The advisability of giving these in a preface has often been condemned. Some people even object to the sources being quoted at all. But surely this is unreasonable. There can be no more harm in Scott quoting his sources of inspiration than there is in a clergyman reading out the text of his sermon. Were such objectors to be strictly consistent they would have to eschew all purely historical novels, since they would (or should) know all the materials and 'stageing' beforehand. But not everybody is of this way of thinking. There are many who like to read the sources quoted, and then watch how they are developed or altered in the actual novel. Others, again, may prefer to read the preface after reading the novel itself. One or other of these two courses certainly does help one to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the different novels. And this clearly was the author's own opinion, for he expressly says, 'These preliminary notices concerning the tale of *Guy Mannering* and some of the characters introduced may save the author and reader in the present instance the trouble of writing and perusing a long string of detached notes.' If this was the attitude of Scott himself, how much more indispensable must these prefaces be to ourselves, who start with no preliminary know-

ledge such as, of course, he possessed ! How little, however, even the public of that day availed themselves of this advantage can be gauged from those words of Scott's which are put at the opening of this article. But though Scott, it would appear, felt that he was engaged upon a fruitless task in writing such long prefaces, it is not unlikely that this consideration troubled him but little. In the first place, Scott was, it must be confessed, rather fond of parading his knowledge. This trait comes out over and over again, not only in giving the sources of his novels, but also in his references to foreign languages, to the classics, and, above all, to the law, with all its procedure and phraseology. In the second place, Scott was himself so genuinely an antiquary that he must have resolved that all these old legends should live on unadorned, in addition to their being handed down as parts of his novels ; and in so doing he has, most people will agree, conferred a great boon on posterity. When one reads his accounts of the way in which some of his novels were originally suggested, one cannot but wonder at his marvellous insight, which saw possibilities in the seemingly most unpromising material. No legend, however weird, coming from whatever strange authority, but was carefully stored up in his retentive mind. A good instance is the old legend told by an uncultured Highlander, which forms the basis of *Guy Mannering*. Though Scott himself speaks of the 'simple narrative on which *Guy Mannering* was originally founded, but to which, in the progress of the work, the production ceased to bear any, even the most distant, resemblance,' it is not easy to endorse this opinion, though literally, no doubt, it is true, as he claims, that only the incident of the horoscope is retained. But, be that as it may, Scott cannot deny his obligations to the actual facts in the instance of *Waverley*. The chivalrous conduct of Waverley and Talbot to one another is copied exactly from the relations of Stewart of Invernayhle and Colonel Whiteford during the '45. And similarly the culminating tragedy of the *Bride of Lammermoor* is directly founded upon what is said to have happened in the family of Dalrymple. So close, indeed, were some of these parallels that Scott's admirers were forced to take up the cudgels on his behalf. 'Because Scott,' says Allan, 'utilised history and frequently introduced individual portraiture, individuals think everything was copied, and ascribe everything to memory and observation, whereas all the principal and most minor scenes and people are creations. The trunk of the tree was solely of his own rearing.' But Allan's zeal has got the better of him here, for it is easy at once

to mention the famous battle of the clans in the *Fair Maid of Perth*, which is certainly a principal scene, and as certainly not a 'creation' of Scott. Again Allan observes, 'It was the singular power of Scott's mind that, while he drew materials indiscriminately from every source within his reach, he confined his descriptions of scene and character to no one individual person or locality.' In support of this instance he cites the character of Waverley, which is a mixture of Scott and Invernayhle. The youthful Waverley, as the promiscuous reader wandering at will among his uncle's library (after the fashion of the great historian Gibbon), is a copy of Scott's own boyhood days. The fact is that some apology was really needed, and this Scott himself recognised. 'Although I have,' he writes, 'deemed historical personages free subjects of delineation, I have never on any occasion violated the respect due to private life.' He tried, as he explains, to generalise the portraits. For all that, his character of Jonathan Oldbuck was so close a copy of the original that people guessed who was the mysterious novelist simply because Oldbuck was a character modelled on a friend of the family. For this apology was needed. But there was no call for Allan to defend Scott, as he did in the first-quoted passage. To the modern way of thinking there is no disgrace in a novelist being indebted to history as much as Scott was. His indebtedness was no slur upon his imaginative and originative faculties, as Allan seemed to think. We must, however, remember that Scott really 'discovered' the historical novel. To-day no critic would fling a stone at an author because his story is based upon fact. But, even apart from these considerations, we cannot be too grateful to Scott for preserving these old traditions. As given by him they are simple, dignified, and romantic. To obtain them he ransacked old chronicles and musty records, consulted with peasants, gamekeepers, wayfaring pilgrims, and bed-ridden sibyls, and, having rescued them from oblivion, he places them in the prefaces of the books they suggested. Merely to have preserved them was due to his antiquarian instincts; to incorporate them in prefaces was a stroke of genius.

But while the question of authorship and the accounts of his original sources are the two main burdens of Scott's prefaces, there are many undercurrents also which are almost equally interesting, and are not to be found in the prefaces of any other writer.

Scott was not only the author of the Waverley Novels; he was their critic as well. And here his love of masquerading under other

names is very well brought out by the various imaginary personages who argue with the writer, whoever he may happen to be at the time. The best example of all is the spirited dialogue in the preface to the *Bride of Lammermoor*, between Peter Pattieson, the author, and the unfortunate painter, Dick Tinto. Says Dick, 'Your characters, my dear Pattieson, make too much use of the gob-box; they patter too much—there is nothing in whole pages but mere chat and dialogue.' Tinto denies the retort that dialogue is that in which each is represented as supporting his own appropriate character, and continues: 'I will be judged by most of your readers, Peter, should these tales ever become public, whether you have not given us a page of talk for every single idea which two words might have communicated, while the posture, and manner, and incident accurately drawn and brought out by appropriate colouring would have preserved all that was worthy of preservation, and saved those everlasting said he's and said she's with which it has been your pleasure to encumber your pages.' This criticism of Tinto, to the effect that prolonged conversation makes the story chill and constrained, sounds strangely in modern ears. It is our complaint rather that Scott does not give us enough conversation in proportion to his many pages of description. How many people have complained that *Ivanhoe* opens with so much description? And does not Scott himself, in one of his prefaces, record the adverse judgment of a good critic to whom he had shown the opening chapters of *Waverley*—a condemnation for which he personally accounts by acknowledging that they are somewhat solid and devoid of incident? What, then, is the function of Dick Tinto, whose advice Scott declares that he has attempted to follow in the *Bride of Lammermoor*? Does he stand for the criticism of some of those intimate friends of the author's who were really 'in the know,' or is he only a dummy whom Scott sets up like a ninepin in order to have the pleasure of knocking him down afterwards? Whichever view may be the correct one, the point is immaterial. The real object, probably, was to give Scott a graceful opportunity of criticising his own novels and giving his views in general upon the various ingredients which go to make up a novel. Such a device is by no means uncommon. That such is the correct view seems to be proved by Scott's express wish to avoid criticism, and by the following words, which show how low he estimated the attacks of such as presumed to criticise his works in any way: 'And now, ye generation of critics,' he says, 'who raise yourselves up as if it were brazen serpents, to

hiss with your tongues and to smite with your stings, bow yourselves down to your native dust and acknowledge that yours have been the thoughts of ignorance and the words of vain foolishness,' &c. Swift and Pope never thundered more violently against the wretched inhabitants of Grub Street. Besides, we have another example of this same game of imaginary arguments in the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, with this difference, that here Mr. Fairscribe praises Mr. Croftangry's work. 'The style is terse and intelligible, Mr. Croftangry, very intelligible; and that I consider as the first point in everything that is intended to be understood.' No; when Scott does deign to reply to his critics (as in the passage just quoted), he lays aside the rapier, to fight with the bludgeon. Then there are no humorous, bantering arguments, but 'bella, horrida bella.' See how sternly he retorts to those who had found fault with his picture of the Covenanters in *Old Mortality*. He begins by complaining that not only has his identity been doubted, but his veracity has been impeached, as has also the authenticity of his historical narratives. This is no charge to be brushed aside by Platonic dialogues; he hits out straight from the shoulder. He is not a man with one ear only, who can hear but one side of the question. Nonconformists and Prelatists, why, there are good and bad men among both parties! And he whose forebears were Quakers can rightly view both parties from an impartial standpoint, making just such minute alterations as suit the purposes of the story. That *Heart of Midlothian* preface is essentially a fighting preface. Scott's prefaces, as giving his own opinion on his own works, are, not to pile up further examples, invaluable, whether we agree with all his judgments or not.

Another very interesting feature of his prefaces is his expression therein of all his hopes and fears. It is delightful to be taken into the great man's confidence, and to find that, for all his past successes, he had great misgivings about *Ivanhoe*, in which he first departed from his Scottish themes. He did not want, he tells us, to become a mannerist. To avoid that imputation he sought inspiration across the Border, just as to-day Crockett has pressed Spain into his service after many 'kailyard' novels. Scott's was a bold experiment, and he knew it. He even thought for a time of publishing under a new name, to prevent opinion being biassed in his favour, but finally gave up the idea. But mark how cunningly 'Templeton' sets forth his difficulties to his friend the Rev. Dr. Dryasdust. Our sympathies are at once enlisted. His materials were only musty records, spoilt by monkish commentaries;

he was now plunging into a strange land and into times with which he had no links. Dare he hope for success? Could he strive successfully against the prejudice of his Scottish readers? Could he overcome the difficulties of the old English language? He hoped so. The language, he thought, must, for popularity's sake, be somewhat modernised, and, after all, its grammatical character, turn of expression, and mode of arrangement were more important than the mere use of antiquated terms. And the same holds good, he says, of the sentiments and manners: the ancients and moderns have much in common. The result was even a greater triumph, perhaps, than it deserved; for many people to-day read *Ivanhoe* who do not go on to read the truer and more lifelike Scottish novels. Still, *Ivanhoe's* success gave us *Quentin Durward*, and for that we all owe him our best thanks.

Mention of *Quentin Durward* calls up another point in Scott's prefaces—his criticism of other authors. The *Quentin Durward* preface, with its elaborate analysis of Louis XI. of France's character, is made the vehicle of a very interesting discussion on the character of Satan in the great works of Goethe, Milton, and Byron, in which Scott gives the first place to Goethe. Again, the concluding words of *The Pirate* preface eulogise Mrs. Radcliffe, whom Scott profoundly admired. 'The professed explanation of a tale, where appearances or incidents of a supernatural character are explained on natural causes, has often, in the winding up of the story, a degree of improbability almost equal to an absolute goblin tale. Even the genius of Mrs. Radcliffe could not always surmount this difficulty.' We must all feel the truth of this remark. As a last instance might be given his eulogy on Miss Edgeworth's Irish stories, which, he says, spurred him on to novel-writing himself; he hoped to make up by intimate acquaintance with his subject what he lacked of talent. For the rest his prefaces are filled with delightful autobiographical touches, confessions of his indolent and rapid methods of composition, and many miscellaneous personal subjects.

What then, to briefly recapitulate, are the salient features of Scott's prefaces? His extraordinary precautions for remaining anonymous need no further discussion. His accounts of the old legends which formed the bases of his stories, and the extraordinary sources from which he obtained these legends, have, it may fairly be said, never been surpassed anywhere, far less in the prefaces to any other series of novels. Scott gives us a delightful short story where the ordinary writers express themselves 'indebted to

So-and-so's kind suggestions,' &c. And with these legends are wonderful pieces of descriptive writing which seem almost wasted upon prefaces which so few people ever read. Emerson once, in writing to Carlyle, said : ' I think you see as pictures every street, church, Parliament-house, barracks, baker's shop, mutton-stall, forge, wharf, and ship, and whatever stands, creeps, rolls, or swims thereabout, and make all your own.' To substitute Scott's for Carlyle's name would be no injustice. And, lastly, there is all his wealth of criticism—criticism of his own novels and of other authors, criticism of his critics, and even criticism of his own criticism. The adjective, it is said, is the enemy of the substantive. Scott's prefaces shall be left to speak for themselves.

M. H. H. MACARTNEY.

At the Sign of the Ship.

I WISH I had been born an American ! The reason has nothing to do with Copyright, nor with a passion for Republican institutions. Admirable as they are, methinks that I could feel myself quite free enough under any despotism, lay, or priestly, or preacherly, so to speak. Nobody can prevent a man from thinking freely, and I never wanted to bellow out my free thoughts about politics or creeds in the market-place. Siberia would have had no terrors for me had I been born a Muscovite, nor the Inquisition had I lived under Philip of Spain, nor Smithfield had I been a subject of 'our own red Mary' ; indeed, I fear that I might have signed the Covenant at home, rather than be excommunicated, and harried, and rabbled. Still, the Covenant was a tough morsel, and methinks I should have withdrawn to France till that tyranny was overpast. A quiet man of books could almost always, almost anywhere, have quite as much freedom as he wanted. People generally meant by 'freedom,' freedom to prevent other people from being free. Liberty has made some strides in Poland, if it be true that workmen who don't want to work 'take the Wilkes and Liberty' of shooting workmen who do want to work. What the friends of freedom of conscience desired in Scotland was not merely leave to go to sermon, but to beat and bully persons who preferred to go to Mass. It is not, therefore, from any cravings for larger liberty that I wish I were an American.

* * *

The reason is that they enjoy Britain so much more than we Britons do. Read Mrs. Pennell's tale called 'Enrietter' in the *Pall Mall Magazine*—and how that magazine can be vended at sixpence, pictures and all, as it is, makes the despair of economists. Enrietter was a 'general,' a pretty and capable 'general' whom Mrs. Pennell, being American, had the good fortune to engage. Enrietter gave her emotions ! Flitting from the house whenever Mrs. Pennell dined out, Enrietter practised *l'orgie échevelée* with

a Clerk in the Bank of England—no less—a clerk who was a patron of a hospital. To return, in a fearfully dissolute state, with the clerk, who let her in by climbing a tall ladder convenient for that purpose, to continue the orgy, to thrill and fill the vicinity with cries of 'Murder!' and, somehow, to get a huge cut over the eyebrows, was to the active Enrietter the work of a moment. Emotions, Mrs. Pennell found, were for the emotional, when, in place of handing Enrietter over to the police, she chaperoned the young lady to a hospital, where the surgeon was rebarbative and did not conceal his injurious suspicions.

* * *

I never knew that if yells of 'Murder!' shrilled from a Briton's house the police might not enter uninvited by the Briton. Mrs. Pennell made that discovery. In novels the police generally do not wait for a formal invitation. The case seems to invite experiment. Let the guests at a dinner-party yell 'Murder!' long and loudly, and find out whether the police enter or not, without the invitation of the host, who may seclude himself in a smoking-room at the back. I only suggest this experiment in the interests of science; I do not intend to make the experiment, as the worthy Beak might not easily be made to understand that the whole performance had a purely scientific purpose, and was not a case of vulgar skylarking. Perhaps murderers, or persons who expect to be murdered, would act more wisely if they took counsel's opinion before slaying, or being slain, in another Briton's castle, or in their own. What happens, I wonder, in a case of 'hamesucken'? I am killed, let us say, in my own house after making noise enough to attract the police. Obviously I, the master of the house or castle, cannot *now* invite the police to enter and avenge me. So I suppose they must remain outside, while my assassin banters them from an open casement. If this be the rule of the game under English law, it seems too favourable to the batsman—the murderer. Mrs. Pennell might give lectures on the subject in comparative legislation, proving that American law is much more sensible than ours, which we might modify. But it is a proof of the ignorance of the community that probably other persons, and not I alone, are ignorant of the relations among the police, a murderer, and the master of the house, or flats, or chambers in which murder is committed. Mr. Tulkithorne was murdered in his chambers (he is a character in a book by an old novelist, Dickens), and Mr. Tulkithorne was himself a lawyer. But the thing was done in

a quiet manner, the neighbourhood was not alarmed, and the case does not illustrate my legal difficulty.

* * *

Meanwhile, incidents like that of Enrietter are not in the experience of British housekeepers. The maidens of our households do not revel and drink deep, and get mysteriously gashed across the brows under our roofs by clerks in the Bank of England. Americans enjoy England much more than we do, perhaps even more than they enjoy America.

* * *

This fact we gather from Mr. Howells' 'American Origins, London Films' in *Harper's Magazine*. Mr. Howells looks about in search of 'American origins' in London, and goes sight-seeing, while he describes the process in an interesting way. Most Britons would no more go sight-seeing in the town than they would play golf in shirt-sleeves and carry their own clubs at St. Andrews, like a gentleman in a picture in *Harper's*. Why we should *not* play golf, like cricket, in shirt-sleeves, but rather in old coats that would beseem a rat-catcher, is rather a mystery. Such, however, is the custom at St. Andrews. Mr. Howells went into the church at All Hallows, Barking, and why? Because William Penn was christened there. I have a high respect for Penn as the friend of a king who was exiled for attempting to introduce religious toleration. But neither I nor you love William Penn so much that we would go to Barking to see the church where he was (though a Quaker) baptized. There is a story of an American who, passing Westminster Abbey on an omnibus, said to his daughter, 'That's Westminster Abbey.'

'And what's Westminster Abbey, papa?' asked the lady.

'That's where our Stanley was married,' replied the sire, though why 'our' Stanley I know not. Thus places have different associations for different people. The headless body of Archbishop Laud was brought to the Barking church, and Laud interests Mr. Howells because he induced several Low Churchmen to leave our shores for those of America, where they could be persecutors in place of being persecuted. They took full advantage of the opportunity. It is a pity that James I., as Mr. Howells informs us, arrested Cromwell and Hampden when they were setting off for America. Cromwell never forgave James I., and took it out of Charles I. Had James really been 'the wisest fool in Christendom,' he

would not only have sped Cromwell and Hampden on their way, but insisted that Laud must also emigrate. However, it does not seem certain that James really did prevent Cromwell from going away, so we must not blame him too hastily. To gaze on the spot whence Cromwell never tried to emigrate (if he did not) is a truly imaginative pleasure. At all events, places of interest in England 'crowd and elbow one another,' which is perhaps the reason why we are all *blasés* and never go to see places of interest. On the whole, as was natural, Mr. Howells found that there were more English than American 'origins' in the City. He asks why nobody republishes Peter Cunningham's Guide, or Handbook to London antiquities, and one can only marvel that somebody does not, for Peter was a good antiquary and was an interesting writer.

My own pilgrimages are not made in London, but, even if we are too ignorant or too lazy to care for the associations of old London, the Americans are of another mind, and Peter would be welcome to them. I feel a wild desire to read Peter Cunningham at once, and perhaps Mr. Murray, whose house originally published Peter, will give him another innings. Mr. Howells thinks that religious toleration 'came into the world' with Roger Williams, but I find an Anabaptist asserting the principles of toleration against John Knox, while surely Holland, as a Scots traveller says (Fountain-hall, I think), was 'the common sink of all religions' at an early date. Catherine de' Medici had tolerant ideas, though she found difficulty in carrying them out, and so had Queen Mary, who argued against Knox in favour of freedom of conscience, 'the vomit of toleration' as an eminent Covenanter styled it.

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I wonder if Mr. Vachell, in *The Hill*, correctly depicts the manners and customs of Harrow. Do House Masters spread a rumour that they are dining out, and then lurk ambushed, with dark lanterns, among their laurels, to catch bad boys who are surreptitiously speeding to London on bicycles? There seems to be a want of dignity in these nocturnal manœuvres, and various mechanical ways of stopping the clandestine jaunts occur to the imagination. Mr. Vachell's villain is rather of the species of villains in *Eric, or Little by Little*, though I own that I once knew a rather worse boy villain than 'The Demon.' That boy could not easily be outdone, even in fiction; but he was a humcrous scoundrel, and the discovery of his complicated crimes (they *were* crimes)

greatly amazed me. After being expelled he came back under cloud of night, induced other boys to elope by a back window, secured their discovery and expulsion, and did something else of a nefarious description. That kind of lad is hardly to be reckoned sane, but people are obliged to reckon him responsible. Mr. Vachell's villain is an excellent cricketer, though he 'swears prophane' when he is yorked first ball in the second innings of a very exciting Eton and Harrow match. Surely amateurs did not, as in the novel, set about raising amateur regiments of horse before a shot was fired in South Africa? The War Office, if I remember well, wanted Volunteer foot, not horse, in which wisdom was not displayed. On the whole, good old *Tom Brown* is still unapproached as a tale of schoolboy life. I do not believe that Arthur really deserved his place in the eleven; he was put in for his moral benefit, if I remember right. But Slogger Williams and Harry East are all that they ought to be, and the Flashman combat was a page from actual life.

* * *

Last month, *à propos* of Dr. Munro's book on false antiquities, I mentioned a few cases of successful 'faking.' Recent converse with the wise and learned has shown me that forgery of antiques is more easy, more frequent, more apt to deceive the very elect of science, and more lucrative than one would suppose. It does appear as if some scholars and professional experts in antiques know a great deal about 'the antique,' but of art have no natural intuition. They have seen everything that is to be seen in all the museums; they have made measurements of tips of ears and tips of noses; they have studied the swirl of a curl and the depth of an eyelid, and they can knowingly decide as to the Greek artist who produced this or that fragment of a head or an ankle. The labours of these worthy men resemble those of your Biblical or Homeric critic, who can assign an approximate date to this or that clause of a verse in Exodus, or to any given passage in the *Iliad*. The labours are worth very little if the critic has no natural intuition of art. We have seen a certain work attributed to Scopas, let us say, and almost adored as a relic of that rare artist. Yet any one who had the least natural taste, the least *flair*, could see at a glance that the Scopas who made this masterpiece was probably not born before 1870 A.D., and indeed it came to be thought so, for reasons more likely to convince a jury than reasons of intuition, which, with a jury, do not go far. Of course, the produc-

tion of a genuine pedigree, tracing the history of the piece behind the age of modern forgeries, would alter the case, but the pedigree was not forthcoming.

There is, in a famous museum, a famous terra-cotta figure of some god or hero. I do not want to be too explicit. Now, somebody, of late, made the acquaintance of a Grecian forger, who showed him a book in which he kept photographs of all his nefarious creations. Across one figure were drawn lines in red ink, separating the head, arms, and legs from the torso of this figure. The artist in iniquities explained that the torso was classical, 'honest Injun,' while the head, arms, and legs were of his own manufacture. Now, the figure thus restored is the figure in the famous museum. Nobody had detected the fraud, and I doubt if anybody could. Why should not this artist, for an artist he is, work as a sculptor on his own account, and restore to Europe the lost art of sculpture? He would not make things like our gingerbread generals and other heroes, in our streets and squares.

* * *

Another archæologist showed me a bronze of his own creation, on which he had bestowed a delightful *patina*, by chemical dodges to him known, adding in an unobtrusive place the maker's initials. This bronze took in the most eminent specialists till they were undeceived. You can now, by chemical dodges, give the antique gloss to new flint objects, axe-heads and arrow-heads, and figurines, so that the path of the specialist is full of pitfalls. I showed to a famous specialist a ring in silver gilt, with inscriptions, made for me after a fifteenth-century ring. He said that by no means could he have detected it as a modern product. Count Tyszkiewicz says, in his *Memories of an Old Collector*, that 'there is not a single engraver in all Italy who imitates, even badly, an antique intaglio, or, indeed, makes a fair copy of it.' The same thing cannot, unluckily, be said of the East. 'Such arts the gods who dwell on high have given to the Greek.' Some years ago the relics of the shop of an ancient gem-cutter were unearthed in Cyprus. Among the things were many scarabs in white chalcedony, all ready made, save that the faces of the gems were plain, unengraved. A modern faker got possession of them, engraved them with designs after the antique, and they are now scattered through the collections of Europe, and probably America. Another dodge is, when an ancient gold ring with a poor intaglio turns up, to copy a good gem in the stone which still remains in the ancient ring. Gold is good material

for the faker; he can, and does, imitate Mycenaean rings, seal and all, in gold. Gold *bullæ* with Etruscan subjects, are much in the market. M. Tyszkiewicz says that the forger can scarcely ever be brought to justice. He says that he merely makes imitations of antique things, while the vendor says that he was taken in himself. The Crimea has long been a centre of fakes, like the famous tiara which cost the Louvre 8000*l*. The Count was 'dazzled and delighted' with his own purchases of ancient plate found at Olbia, though some of the things, imitations of Athenian work by ancient Scythian artists, did seem a little queer. However, he made allowances for Scythian inexperience. An account of the things was published by the Academy of Inscriptions, and Count Gregory Stroganoff came to see them. He only said '*Musica!*' which is Italian for 'fake.' The Count knew all about the manufacture; the objects are now chiefly the delight of collectors in Germany. There is an artist in Syria whose fakes can hardly be detected. It cannot be at all difficult to forge Celtic jewellery, plain penannular bangles and so forth. In *The Treasure of the Oxus*, recently published, is a truly romantic account of the fortunes of a Central Asian hoard, stolen by robbers from merchants, rescued by Sir Richard Burton, conveyed into India, and there 'interpolated' with fakes, so that you don't exactly know which pieces are antique and which are modern. Even old postage-stamps and book-plates may be forged, but one has little sympathy with the people who collect such things as these. Nothing can exceed the delight of a collector who can say '*Musica!*' to the gem of another collector, except the joy of a fellow-angler who remarks 'Kelt!' when you have hold of a fish, or your own pleasure when the fish, after all, proves to be clean run.

* * *

An anonymous correspondent states that, in his opinion, the 'Linesman' who writes in some newspaper about cricket, as mentioned last month, is not the 'Linesman' who wrote so eloquently on warfare. I took the quotation on Mr. Maclaren's play from the *Publishers' Circular*; whether the article was by the genuine 'Linesman' or not, as I only saw a fragment of the work, I am unable to say with certainty.

* * *

We do not seem to have luck in the Test Matches. The Australians, like Philip II. of Spain, may say: 'Time and We against

any Eleven !' Good old Time, 'not out,' saved the third match for the Colonists ; and, if I remember rightly, Time and Rain saved the second—of course with the aid of the stubborn Australian defence. Unless there be rain and a difficult wicket, the matches will never get themselves played out, for with our arrangements we cannot play a match on indefinitely for ever and ever. The last of the five matches, I understand, is to be played on and on, till Guy Fawkes Day, or Christmas Day, or the day of the Royal Martyrdom, till it is finished, even if Mr. Armstrong bowls for ever unchanged. Thus something decisive must happen ; but these processes are tedious and unsatisfactory.

* * *

The University Match was one of the most interesting and strange. Twice Cambridge seemed devoted to destruction, first when 290 were up for the fourth Oxford wicket, and Messrs. Wright and Raphael were on the verge of centuries. Then Mr. Wright missed a straight ball, and then the regular Oxford collapse came. Was it because Mr. Napier and Mr. Morcom were suddenly inspired, as bowlers, or because the batsmen lost nerve ? The bowlers, to an onlooker, seemed to have 'found a length' simultaneously. Yet they did not puzzle Mr. Udal, who is not a nervous person, so perhaps a reign of terror was the true explanation of the *débâcle*. Again, when Mr. Evans bowled as he did in the second innings of Cambridge, and when the field backed him, all seemed over but shouting. All *would* have been over if Mr. Macdonnel and Mr. Colbeck had been accessible to fear. But, like Nelson, they knew not fear, and hit everything. On the other hand, nervousness, quite as much as good bowling, seemed to account for the second Oxford *débâcle*. Surely Oxford batsmen should have hit at all risks, rather than encourage the bowlers by a tame and futile defence ! They could not have been worse beaten had they hit at everything. The offensive is the winning policy on these occasions. At all events, no victory was ever better deserved than that of Cambridge, who won through sheer pluck and not knowing when they were beaten. I am obliged to finish without knowing how the Amateurs batted against the Players, but after witnessing a few overs of Mr. Bosanquet's, a spectacle remarkable indeed, batsmen running ten yards away to the off to hit at a ball, trebly wide, while other balls seemed to paralyse the batsmen, as the snake paralyses the bird. But they also did not quite hit the wickets.

Mr. Brearley bowled very well—

put forth a spell
Of woven paces and of waving hands,

like Vivien, when she hypnotised Merlin. It is a comfort to see a fast bowler who does not take a run of at least twenty-two paces, like the Oxford bowlers. These spurts appeared to fatigue them very soon, and surely they are tedious and superfluous. It cannot be really necessary to run so long, and the result was apt to be a no-ball. Each over, to each bowler, was equivalent to more than a hundred yards, and the result was that the spin promptly deserted the Oxford bowlers.

ANDREW LANG.

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